TOUGH DECISIONS, 9 | YOUR MONEY, YOUR LIFE, 19 | SLICE OF LIFE, 36

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The joy of giving

Isabelle Joly finds happiness in helping others

See story on page 29

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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"To end a week with such great news was a wonderful feeling. Our teachers work so hard." - *Jeremy Visone*

See story page 6

ON THE COVER

Isabelle Joly, 9, a fourth-grade student at Ruth Chaffee School, enjoys helping others. Her latest endeavor is "Project Night Night" and she is gathering blankets, books and stuffed toys for children in area shelters.

Photo by Lisa Brisson
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Michael Rosenkrantz, president of Newington Community Television, sits in the control room.

Scott Allo, vice president of the station, prepares one of the cameras for a live program.

Photos by Mark Jahne

Long-running access TV

Newington Community Television marks its 30th anniversary this year

by Mark Jahne
Editor

It was a new concept 30 years ago – local television produced by local people.

Newington Community Television has been through some changes, but it continues to fulfill its original mission by providing community access programming to residents.

The station is run exclusively by volunteers. Michael Rosenkrantz, 33, is president of the organization. He grew up in town, still lives here, and was a small child when NCTV aired its first program.

"I started to get involved a little bit in high school. I've been doing stuff here on a regular basis since 2005," he said. "I like the technical part of it."

Over the past two years, the station was able to acquire state grant funding to upgrade its equipment. NCTV's studio and offices are located on the lower level of town hall. Prior to that, they were located on Welles Drive North.

"We moved over here in 2009. We've been able to do some major upgrades of our equipment," Rosenkrantz said.

Vice President Scott Allo said NCTV is what is considered a user group of the Cox Manchester franchise.

"We are an outlet for our community," he said.

NCTV's signal is sent out in three ways, Rosenkrantz explained. One is to Cox Cable, and it is also sent via Frontier U-Verse and on the Internet.

Community access stations tend to focus on public access, local government and educational programming. NCTV does the first two. Public access programming appears on channel 14 on the cable dial and government programs are seen on channel 16, which includes live coverage of Town Council, Board of Education and Town Plan and Zoning Commission meetings.

"People still want to know what's going on in their town."

– Scott Allo

Remote-controlled cameras were installed in those meeting rooms. Allo said that improved the experience for viewers.

"Now we've got multiple angles. You can see who's talking," he said.

NCTV accepts programs produced by its members and volunteers, as well as those who are not. Equipment is available for loan to any resident with a program in mind.

"I'd love to see more high school sports," Allo said as one example of a program a resident could undertake.

In addition to the government meetings, regular programs include "Connecticut Conversations," "Talk to the Mayor," "All Things Victorian," "Simply Fresh Food," "The Garage – Toolbox" and "Kiwanis Hour."

One of the longest-running shows is "Talk to the Mayor." It airs monthly, and viewers can call in during the live broadcast at 860-667-5814 to pose questions to the mayor and his guests.

The show is hosted and moderated by media personality Steve Parker and is repeated throughout the month. It has a dedicated following, according to Allo.

"You never realize how many are watching until there's a technical difficulty," he said with a smile.

"We have tried to engage [residents] a little more with social media," Rosenkrantz added.

The two men talked about how much technology has changed over the past three decades. The single greatest leap was from analog to digital broadcasting.

Allo said that makes programs much easier to edit and allows for a high level of computerization. The station owns a cellular modem that it can take out on location to cablecast such events as the Memorial Day Parade.

Another major change is the development of hundreds of channels available to cable consumers, which adds to the challenge of building a local cable access audience.

"Viewership has gotten much more fragmented. Every year, there's

WHERE TO FIND NCTV

Channels 14 and 16 for Cox Cable subscribers.

Channel 99 community access menu for Frontier U-Verse subscribers. Scroll down to find the listing for Newington.

Online at www.nctv.org. Both channels can be watched live or as on-demand content.

more stuff competing for people's attention," Rosenkrantz said.

"People still want to know what's going on in their town," Allo said.

There are about 25 people who regularly volunteer at NCTV. Rosenkrantz puts in from two to four nights a week. He is pleased that this group brings with it so many individual skill sets.

"We're all volunteers. Everybody contributes," Allo said. "I come here and do things I enjoy doing."

Anyone can apply to become a member. There is no fee.

NCTV is a local affiliate of the Cox Communications community access system. It's also part of a six-town franchise including Glastonbury, South Windsor, Manchester, Rocky Hill and Wethersfield. Newington functions in an operating group with Rocky Hill and Wethersfield.

Those who volunteered and took on leadership roles in the early years included Everett Weaver, Joseph Doyle, Cory LaChance, Alex Kuhn, Vin Fandetti, Paul Glotzer, Lawrence Hughes, Judith Strong, Marge Clauson, Daniel Coyle, John Oman, Robert Anderson, Edward Pizzella and Mikki and Matthew Zadrowski. Weaver, Pizzella and Glotzer remain active leaders.

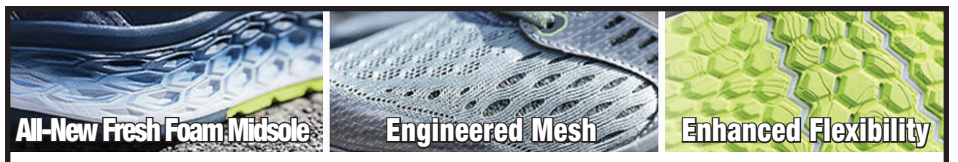
Funding comes from the town of Newington, private donations, donations from local civic organizations and Cox Communications, an add-on fee to the cable bill. Station staff is always looking for grants and other sources of money to offset costs.

NCTV programming originally aired on Channel 32, airspace that it shared with Rocky Hill and Wethersfield. Cox Communications changed the airspace access to Channel 14 in the mid-1990s.

Getting ready for a live "Talk to the Mayor" program are, from left, Library Director Lisa Masten, Mayor Roy Zartarian and host Steve Parker.

Event listings on the station's community calendar are free to non-profit and governmental agencies serving the Newington area. **NL**

To learn more, visit nctv.org or drop by between 7-9 p.m. during Thursday open office hours.



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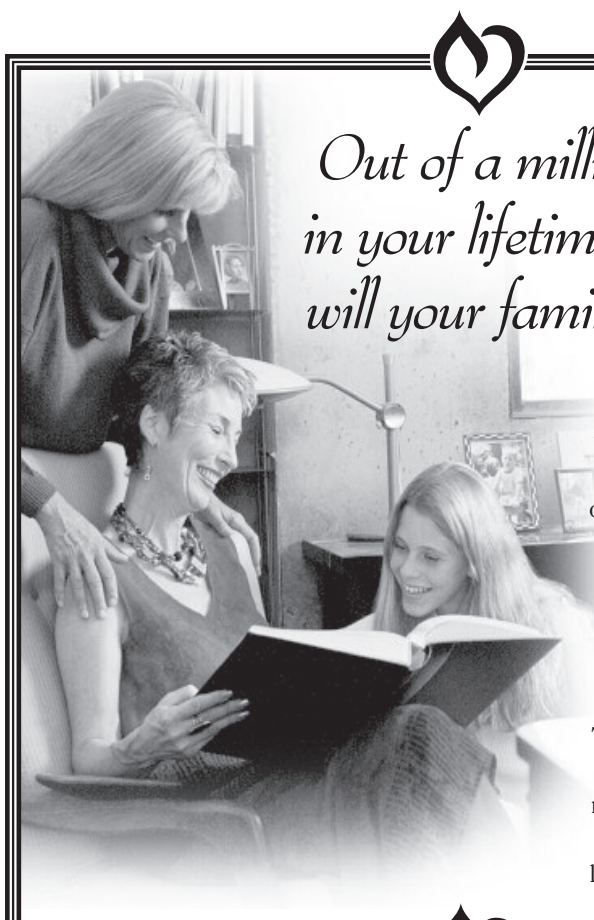
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LIFE *in the classroom*

Anna Reynolds School is nominated for national honor

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Hanging in the entrance to Anna Reynolds School are small mementos and newspaper clippings of some of the accomplishments of its students, teachers and staff. Now the school community has another honor to showcase.

Anna Reynolds is one of just four schools in Connecticut to be nominated for the National Blue Ribbon Schools Program. A part of the U.S. Department of Education, the blue ribbon is an award that has been

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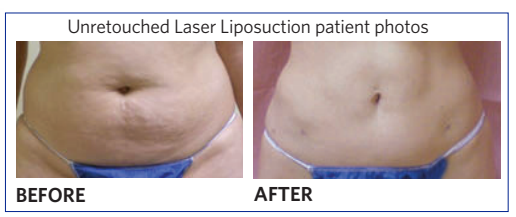

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bestowed on nearly 7,000 schools across the country since its inception in 1982.

It seeks to recognize public and private schools in one of two categories, the first of which is for exemplary achievement gap closing schools. Those nominated for this award were in the top 15 percent in the country to advance the closing of minority and other subgroup achievement gaps in English and mathematics over the past five years, as measured by state assessments.

The second category, in which Anna Reynolds was nominated, is for exemplary high-performing schools. These are ranked in the top 15 percent in English and mathematics, also as measured by state assessments.

"The metric that is used are the Smarter Balanced results," Principal Jeremy Visone said. "Before that, it was the Connecticut Mastery Test for many years."

Newington was on the forefront of the assessment changes, having piloted the program two years ago and given its first round of assessments in the spring of 2015. It was the result of those exams that qualified the school for the nomination.

"It's very exciting," Visone said of the recognition.

He learned that the school had been nominated in late January after receiving a text message from his secretary that someone had called the school looking for him.

"I had no idea who he was, and when I called and he answered he said he was from the state Department of Education," Visone recalled with a small laugh. "I just remember thinking, what an honor. How could I say no to that?"

"To end a week with such great news was a wonderful feeling. Our teachers work so hard."

– Jeremy Visone

After learning about the nomination, he was excited to be able to share the news with the teachers and staff at an emergency staff meeting he called for that afternoon.

"In the past few years, I've unfortunately had to bring the staff together for some tough reasons, like personnel issues that needed to be announced," Visone said. "To end a week with such great news was a wonderful feeling. Our teachers work so hard."

Though he said the teachers all responded positively to the nomination, they were informed that there was still work to be done. Following the selection by the state, Anna Reynolds has to complete a lengthy application and submit it to the national department by March 19.

"We have a lot of essays to write. You piece all these essays together and combine that with demographic information and test scores," Visone said. "We've broken up into groups in the school, little clusters of teachers, to get it done."

One faculty member who has been instrumental in leading the charge is Carol Duggan, a first grade teacher who said she has a unique perspective on Anna Reynolds and the blue ribbon process. A former student at the school, Duggan was teaching there in 1994 when it was nominated for and won a national blue ribbon prize.

"I have the perspective of a student, a parent and a teacher," Duggan said. "I wanted to be a part of this process because I grew up in Newington, we raised our children in Newington and to be a teacher in Newington was a dream come true for me."

The final decision on which schools will be honored will be announced in the fall, but Visone said he is not too preoccupied with whether or not his school wins.

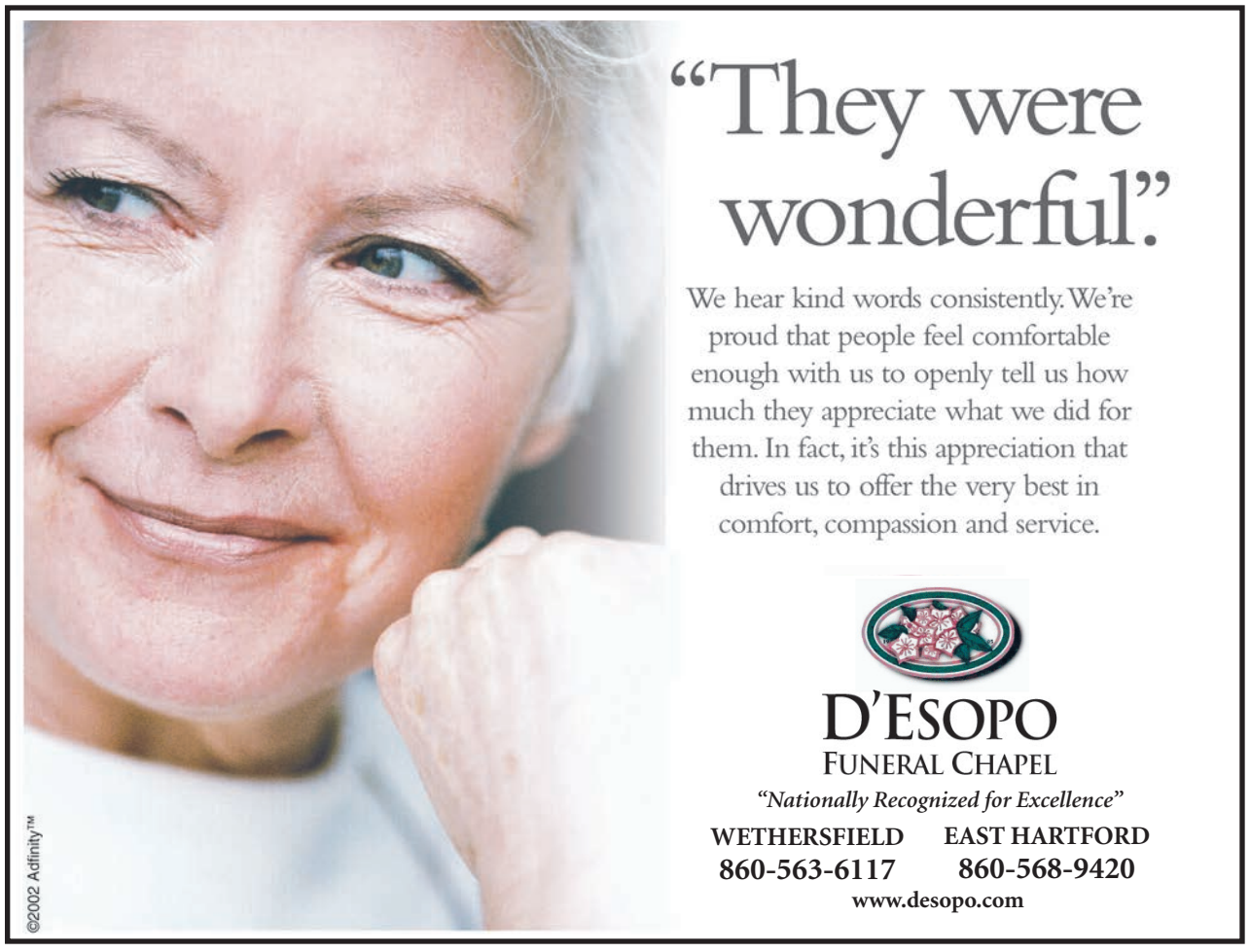
"Of course, it would be wonderful to be one of them, but we are honored to be recognized as a nominee," he said.

According to both Visone and Duggan, the recognition that Anna Reynolds is receiving through this program is not only a reflection of the school's dedication to students and education, but the district as a whole.

"Any of our seven schools could be recognized on any year at any metric. It just so happens that at this time it was us," Visone said. "We work together in Newington and this is a nice validation for what we do as a district."

"I truly believe that in Newington all of the schools are worthy. What we have is pretty special," Duggan said.

"Sometimes I think Newington may get overlooked because we're a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small town without a lot of affluence, so I think it's great to show that we have such great resources and families and staff here."

Visone said a large part of the district's success is due to the teachers in each school who dedicate themselves to education.

"The credit needs to be given to our teachers who put in so much time and effort," he said. "The research tells us that the most important determinant for a child's success is the quality of their instruction and we have great teachers across the district."

Superintendent of Schools William Collins agreed that the quality of education in the town is a large part of the reason why its schools are being recognized.

"I am so proud of our teachers and administrators for achieving this award. Over the past few years, our district has been completely transformed thanks to the hundreds of dedicated professionals who always put kids first," he said.

"The work has been difficult and there were many challenges along the way that tested our resilience. This reward validates that hard work and our team approach to student learning."

Visone also said that support from parents has helped to make the schools worthy of recognition.

"As a team, we could be doing a lot of great things, but if we didn't have that parental support, it wouldn't work," he said. "Our parents here are super involved."

Duggan agreed that there was no one specific group that can take all of the credit for the school's success.

"It's not just the teachers, it's not just the parents, it's not just the principal – who is amazing, by the way – it's not just the kids, it's everybody. It's the administrators who help the teachers to be better teachers, it's the parents who help their children to succeed," she said.

"We have bus drivers who come in and read to kids and the superintendent will come in and read. It's everybody. It takes a village. People use that phrase all the time, but it's so true."

With this most recent recognition, Visone said those at Anna Reynolds are taking the opportunity to look at what they've been doing right and identify areas where they can continue to improve.

"We want to use this as a way to reenergize ourselves and see what we can do better," he said. "When you do good things, you want to know what you've done there so you can replicate it." **NL**

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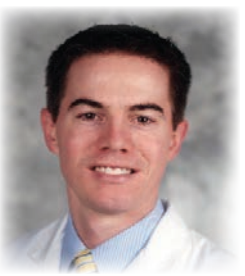
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Making the tough decisions

Terry Borjeson serves on the state Board of Pardons and Paroles

by Mark Jahne
Editor

The concept is to reduce recidivism, invest more in crime prevention, reduce victimization and create a safer and less violent society.

Those are the forces that shape the Connecticut Board of Pardons and Paroles. Terry Borjeson of Newington is one of its members. A former state employee and Town Council majority leader, he was appointed to the board by Gov. Dannel Malloy, a fellow Democrat, in October 2014.

He was previously employed by the Connecticut Office of Adult Probation where, over the course of a 30-year career, he rose from probation officer to deputy director in charge of all adult programs in the state.

During his tenure, he also served as the executive director of the New England Council on Crime and Delinquency.

After Borjeson retired from state service in 2003, he became the vice president of government operations for a Massachusetts software company that built automated systems for probation, parole and other government entities. He subsequently worked for a nonprofit organization managing multiple

Courtesy photo

Terry Borjeson is a member of the Connecticut Board of Pardons and Paroles.

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work release programs, a pardons project and a driving under the influence education program.

He was the committee chairman and primary author of "Performance-Based Standards for Community Corrections," which is currently used by the American Correctional Association National Accreditation Project.

Borjeson earned a sociology degree from Fairfield University and a master of business administration from the University of Connecticut.

There are 10 members on the board, some of whom serve full time and others part time. Borjeson falls into the latter category.

"I've always liked the work. You're making a difference for families, victims and offenders. I managed halfway houses and alternative incarceration centers. I retired three times. I'm not good at it. My wife wanted me out of the house," he said with a smile.

Borjeson said he always wanted to do something meaningful with his life, and serving on the board is it.

"I managed halfway houses and alternative incarceration centers. I retired three times. I'm not good at it. My wife wanted me out of the house."

– Terry Borjeson

"You can change a life. You can make a difference," he said.

There are two things the board does. One is parole hearings, which determine the conditions of release from prison into a halfway house or general population. The other is revocation and recission hearings.

He works out of the Rowland Government Center in Waterbury. Almost all of the hearings are conducted by videoconference, with board members seated in Waterbury and the subjects of their hearings at the various prisons, or correctional centers, around the state.

Families of the inmates may watch the videoconference at a facility in New Haven and families of victims can do the same in Waterbury. The only place where board members sit in the same room as inmates seeking pardons or paroles is the Brooklyn Correctional Center in eastern Connecticut, which Borjeson said houses mostly sex offenders.

"There are hearings almost every day. I probably average nine or 10 a month," he said.

Parole means a convicted felon is released from prison, and it is only granted after a hearing to determine whether he or she merits such treatment.

"We have parole officers who work for us who go into the institution and write up summaries for us,"

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he said. "We have [inmates] explain why they feel they should get parole."

Part of the explanation is convincing the board that they will change their ways and not repeat the behavior that led to arrest, conviction and incarceration.

"We do a lot of prep work because you want to make sure you make the right decision," he said.

Information available to the board used to be limited, but that all changed after the high-profile Petit home invasion case in Cheshire in 2007 that left a woman and her two daughters dead and her husband badly beaten.

"When the Petit [home invasion] happened, more information was forthcoming," Borjeson said.

That has been a great help, but he said the members could still use better access to important information so they can have as much background data as possible before them when rendering a decision. They do have the benefit of numerous assessment tools and aggregate data.

The board can also pardon an inmate. When taking this action, the person's entire criminal history is erased.

"Pardons have grown exponentially," he said.

The process is detailed and takes at least six months to complete. Borjeson is a proponent of Malloy's Second Chance Society act, which provides parole and pardon options for offenders under 25 years of age. Studies indicate that the human brain is not completely developed until that age.

The goals of this law are to reduce crime and offer non-violent offenders the opportunity to successfully reintegrate into society and become workers and taxpayers. It was approved this past June with bipartisan support in the state legislature.

Borjeson said the state's long-time challenges of prison overcrowding and the cost of incarceration are not as profound as they were in years past. He added that many types of crime are down and, when the Second Chance Society was signed into law, statistics were cited indicating that crime in Connecticut is at a 48-year low.

In all decisions it makes, the board sets three priorities upon which to focus: community protection, victim impact and offenders. He firmly believes that low-level drug dealers and non-violent criminals should be offered the opportunity to mend their ways and prove that they can lead law-abiding and productive lives.

Borjeson said it is not uncommon for someone who never was in trouble with the law to become involved with drugs after an accident or injury. The prescription painkillers run out and they are either addicted or desire more such drugs, so they resort to illegal means to obtain them.

"I see that every day. It's an epidemic," he said.

However, he and his colleagues also take pains to make sure that those who truly belong behind bars stay there.

"We keep people in who need to be kept in. There are people in there who should never leave," Borjeson said. "Every individual is different. You're dealing with human nature."

He believes both the board and the state Department of Corrections are doing a better job of preparing inmates for their eventual return to society. The board will grant those former inmates it deems worthy a certificate of employability they can show to potential employers.

This document indicates that they have completed their sentence, are no longer under parole supervision, have not been arrested and have lived in general society for at least 90 days without incident.

Carleton Giles, chairman of the state Board of Pardons and Paroles, praised Borjeson for his work. Giles called him affable and said that he cannot recall the Newington resident making even a single error.

He pointed out that in most states pardons are the exclusive right of the governor. In Connecticut, the Board of Pardons and Paroles has the full and final say.

"Terry has a long history in the probation field. He brings a depth of knowledge," Giles said. "He is very professional and easy to work with. His temperament is wonderful. It's very, very important work, examining these folks on the risk they pose, rather than the mistake they made." **NL**

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Dealing with tough times

Police face additional stress and challenges on the street

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Police Chief Stephen Clark has enjoyed a long history in law enforcement and has personally witnessed many changes. But, in all his years wearing a badge, he has never seen officers operating under such heightened scrutiny and pressure.

High-profile incidents in places like Ferguson, Mo., and Baltimore and Chicago have received massive nationwide news coverage. In these instances and others, police actions were questioned and racial issues became a significant part of the equation.

In each case, a person of color died at the hands of police. There has also been an increase in unprovoked attacks upon police officers by members of the public, in some cases resulting in the officers' deaths.

There's a name for it – the Ferguson Effect. Clark and other law enforcement leaders worry that, in trying to correct alleged wrongs, officers may second-guess themselves or not be as aggressive as they need to be in enforcing the law and rooting out crime.

"You have the 24-hour news cycles, so it's constantly being played," he said of the high-profile incidents.

He added that social media is also an important factor, and that can complicate the situation if people transmit false or misleading information through cyberspace.

"The environment now that officers have to work under is extremely difficult," Clark said. "Officers are under a great amount of pressure and it affects how they do their jobs."

Police Chief Stephen Clark

Photo by Mark Jahne

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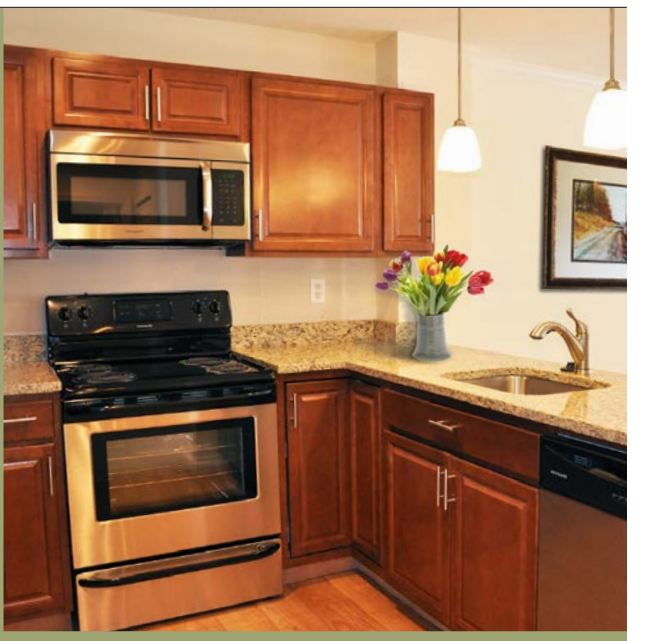

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Much more accountability and transparency are required than in years past.

A police officer's mistake or split-second decision gets a great deal of public scrutiny. One way to keep these kinds of incidents to a minimum is to have high hiring standards and expectations.

"It's important, as a chief, to make sure only the best people get into the profession," he said. "There are not a lot of people who want to do this job anymore."

Clark is well aware that officers operate in stressful conditions and are called upon to make decisions that can have a lasting impact, especially when it comes to using force.

He added that modern policing calls for more reporting and administration than ever before, which is a drawback.

"The administrative tasks officers have to do are taking them away from proactive patrol and community policing," he said.

Another part of the problem is police are duty-bound to enforce the law and that does not make them popular with the general public.

"The police become the face of unpopular laws and public policy," he said. "There are a lot of dynamics working right now."

Officers are required to record the race of every motorist they stop. This and other data including gender, ethnicity, the reason for and duration of the stop, is then analyzed and reports are created by state government that give the department and public an insight into how local law enforcement is performing.

Clark questions the methodology used by the state to rate police performance, noting that such important factors as census and workforce data are not part of the equation that tells how police interact with the motorists they stop.

It does not take into account people who live elsewhere but travel through town to dine, shop, work or for other reasons, meaning the demographic of the people with which police interact in town is much more diverse than the demographic of the town itself.

"The environment now that officers have to work under is extremely difficult. Officers are under a great amount of pressure and it affects how they do their jobs."

– Police Chief Stephen Clark

"There are 30,000 cars a day on Cedar Street. There's a lot of activity here," he said.

Police must have a legal reason to stop a motorist. When they do, it can lead to the discovery of illegal drugs, weapons, wanted felons and more. Police also have to give each motorist a card indicating how he or she can file a formal complaint if they believe the officer did not act in a professional manner.

Clark said the prior state report, compiled in 2000, showed there were no statistically significant differences in the races of motorists stopped by Newington officers.

"That study took into account more variables. A study can't say with 100 percent certainty that racial profiling is occurring," he added. "It's incumbent on each police department to monitor officers' activities to make sure that bias-based policing is not occurring."

At a time when elected officials and civic leaders make accusations of racism, officers can become hesitant to do their job, which is to prevent crime and protect people, Clark said.

He said every call police go on, no matter how seemingly routine, has the possibility of becoming a deadly encounter. It is therefore natural that officers are cautious and suspicious of their surroundings.

He is worried that the Ferguson Effect is leading to an increase in crime, not just in Connecticut, but also all over the country. Criminals take advantage of the situation when the police back off.

"It's a fine line. No officer wants a citizen complaint made against him," he said. "We just put the whole department through diversity training."

He found the program particularly good at helping individual officers identify how any biases they have could affect their decisions. He also thinks it is beneficial that Newington police staffing is diverse, with several female officers as well as officers of different racial and cultural backgrounds. Some of them speak other languages, including Spanish and Polish, an additional benefit.

Most of the officers under his command have college degrees – some more than one – and training has improved over the years since he first donned a uniform.

"The job has increasingly become more professional," he said.

Clark is also a proponent of community policing. Departments that create strong relations with various constituencies in the community are usually able to handle controversial issues better than those that do not have such ties.

Examples of community policing in Newington include a designated community services officer, youth programs, a resource officer at the high school and the Citizens Police Academy. The department also has a Facebook page that receives a lot of traffic.

Constant and aggressive enforcement alienates the public, he added.

"You want to maintain that relationship with the community," he said. "You've got to find a balance to your policing." NL

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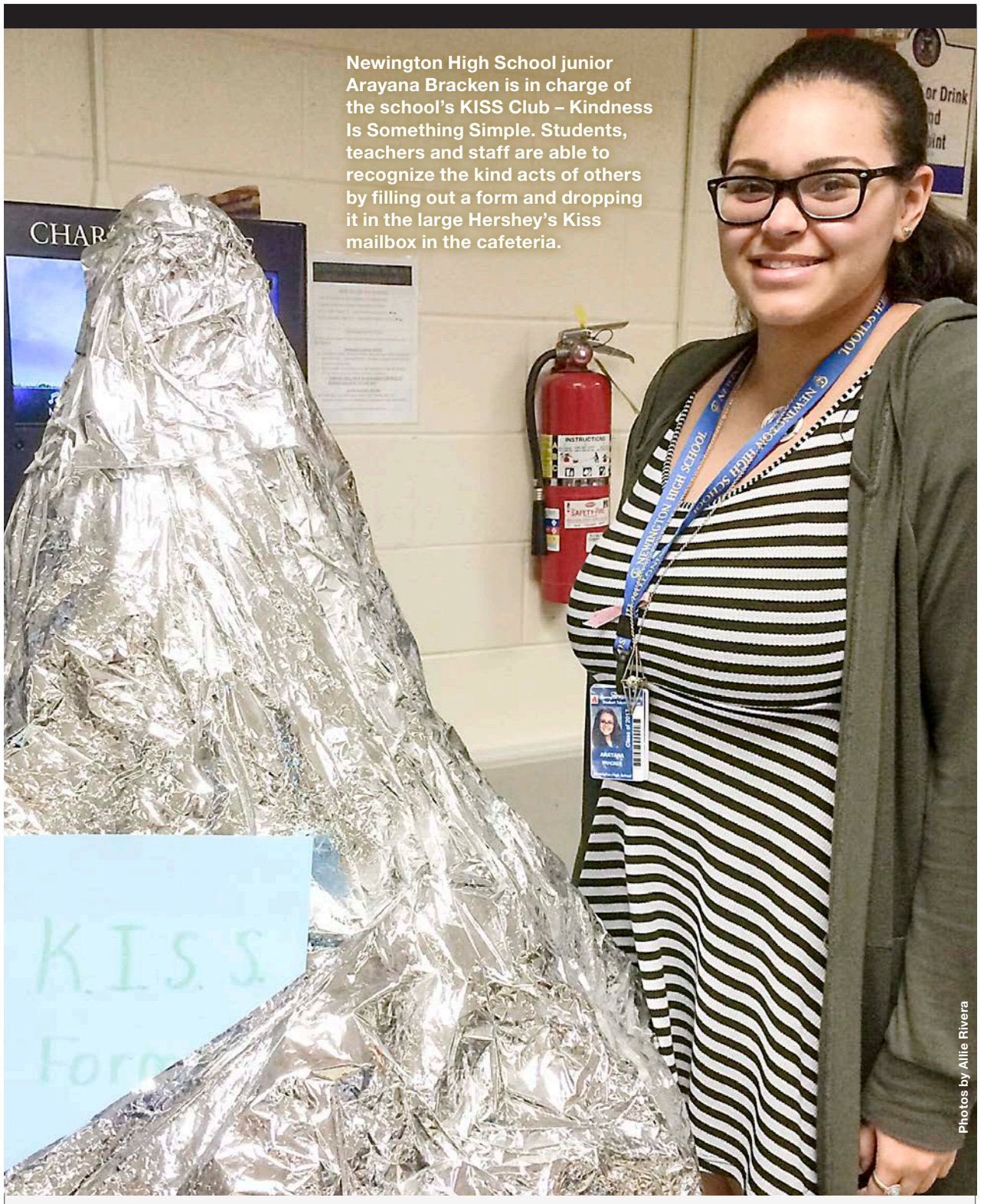

Newington High School junior Arayana Bracken is in charge of the school's KISS Club – Kindness Is Something Simple. Students, teachers and staff are able to recognize the kind acts of others by filling out a form and dropping it in the large Hershey's Kiss mailbox in the cafeteria.

Photos by Allie Rivera

Student of the month

Arayana Bracken's kindness is contagious

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

When Arayana Bracken walks into a room, people say her smile is infectious.

"She is a personable, bright, enthusiastic young woman who brightens up any room she walks into," Terra Tigno, associate principal at Newington High School, said.

Arayana said that she hasn't always been the outgoing and sociable person that she is today. She is in her junior year.

"I really opened up sophomore year," she said.

An honor student, Arayana, 16, was honored in February as the superintendent's outstanding student of the month.

School work has always been important to this girl, who counts her Honors English class as one of her favorites. As of press time, she and her classmates were working their way through "Beowulf."

"I like to read," she said. "I really liked freshman year when we read 'To Kill a Mockingbird.'"

Arayana said another class that she loved taking was

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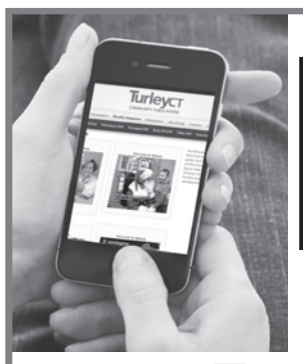
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Infant and Child Development. Students worked directly with young children.

"We got assigned a kid and we would work one on one with them," she explained. "I had a kid named Ryan and he was very quiet, but it's cool to see how when you work with them, they can really open up."

Learning about how people think and feel has always been a fascinating topic to Arayana. She plans to study psychology in college and, although she doesn't know exactly what she will do with that degree yet, she has a few ideas.

"I know I want to work in the federal government," she said. "I want to be a profiler for the FBI. It's someone who looks at criminals and tries to understand why they did what they did."

In addition to her studies, Arayana tries to stay active both in school and out. She danced at Stage Left Dance Studio in Middletown for eight years, practicing a variety of styles. She began dancing competitively and even competed at a national competition in Atlantic City, New Jersey, until an injury forced her to stop.

"I broke my foot freshman year and that changed things," she said. "When I got to high school and had a broken foot, I had to find something else that I could do."

A friend of hers suggested that she try swimming and she joined the team her sophomore year.

"I knew how to swim, but I had never done it competitively before," she said.

Arayana said she has grown as both a swimmer and as a teammate and she was recognized for that this year with the Coach's Award, the Most Helpful Award and the Sportsmanship Award.

"I plan on doing it my senior year, too," she said.

For the first time this year, she also decided to join the Student Council, where she serves on the faculty appreciation committee as well as helping to plan Spirit Week.

"I don't know why I didn't do it before," she said with a laugh. "I love doing it."

As part of the Student Council, Arayana also helps with a variety of service projects including Dance for a Chance, a dance for students of all abilities; Breakfast with Santa at Saint Mary School, and running Crayons for Cancer at Newington High School's Spring Fest.

Giving back to others is something that has always been important to Arayana. She is the sole member of the KISS Club, which stands for Kindness Is Something Simple.

"The purpose is to recognize acts of kindness," Tigno said. "You can recognize even little things, like if you dropped your books and someone helped you pick them up."

A large, shiny silver mailbox shaped like a Hershey's Kiss sits in the school cafeteria. When students, teachers or staff see an act of kindness, they can fill out a small form – either with their name or anonymously – and drop it into the box.

Arayana checks that mailbox frequently and then delivers an actual Hershey's Kiss to the person being recognized. Additionally, those who are cited for an act of kindness are automatically entered into a raffle for a small prize at the end of each month.

"She religiously checks it every day," Tigno said.

"Not everyone gets recognized for what they do that makes people's days," Arayana said. "I think it's important to recognize that."

Those who know Arayana best said it is her kindness toward others and maturity that sets her apart from her peers.

"She's a very self-motivated, conscientious student who teachers feel very comfortable giving tasks to because she has great follow through and always gets the job done," science teacher Heidi Florian said.

"She's a very self-motivated, conscientious student who teachers feel very comfortable giving tasks to because she has great follow through and always gets the job done."

– Heidi Florian

Arayana's next project is volunteering as a facilitator with the school's Truth About Hate program, an all-day program for sophomores that teaches diversity and compassion.

"It's meant for the sophomores to realize how things can be offensive," she said. "People need to understand that the things that they may think are just a joke can be hurtful."

During past Truth About Hate programs, students have expressed their feelings about bullying and intolerance, or even come out to their peers for the first time.

"I really like hearing the stories that people tell," Arayana said.

As a facilitator, she will go through training to work with a teacher to run a small group program for sophomores following a larger assembly.

"I think it's important and I think it's worth it," she said. "I do think some good comes out of it, maybe not for every single person, but it definitely helps."

When not in school, Arayana likes spending time with her family, including her brother Kaedon, 4, who is a student at John Paterson School. The family often takes trips to visit family in either Canada or Jamaica, where Arayana's mother was born and raised.

"It makes me really appreciate what I have because they really don't have much down there," she said.

With nearly a year and a half left until she graduates from Newington High School, she is excited to spend the time being as involved as she can in the school and helping in as many ways as she can.

"I'm very sociable," she said. "I like to help people and be around others as much as possible." **NL**

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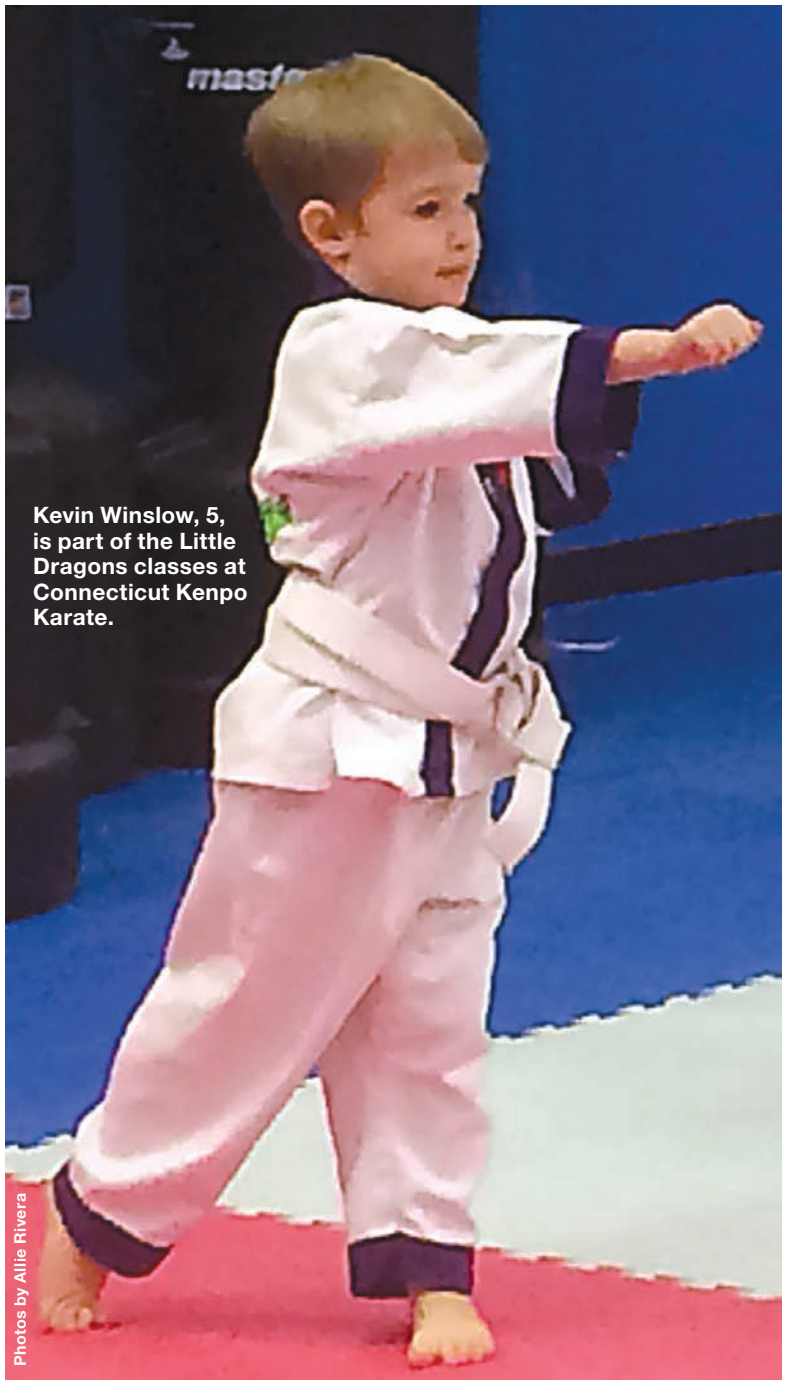

Kevin Winslow, 5, is part of the Little Dragons classes at Connecticut Kenpo Karate.

Photos by Allie Rivera

New location, same dedication

Connecticut Kenpo Karate continues to teach martial arts

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

In the spacious Connecticut Kenpo Karate studio in the plaza on Lowrey Place, Lee Anne Brophy stood facing a mirror that spanned the length of the room.

On either side of her were two or three students, all around age 5, standing with their left foot braced in front of them, their arms up in front of their chests. With one word from Brophy, they all spring forward, punching their right arm out, with many calling out a "hah" sound.

"She's extremely good with the little ones," Head Instructor and Business Manager Wayne Tanguay said. "She just has a way about her."

Brophy and Tanguay, who are married to one another, run Connecticut Kenpo Karate, now in its 25th year and in a new location in town. Brophy also serves as its program director.

"Both of us also work full-time jobs," Tanguay said. "This is just something we do because we love it."

Their mutual love of Kenpo karate began around 1988 when Tanguay said his children began taking classes.

"My kids were in it and that drew me into it, too," he said. "Then both of us just fell in love with the teaching aspect."

Kenpo karate, created by a man named Ed Parker, is a mixture of Chinese and Japanese martial arts that primarily uses self-defense maneuvers and rapid hand strikes. The local business offers classes of all levels, ranging from Little Dragons and Beginner Dragons, typically ages 4-10, to Advanced Dragons, typically ages 10-12, juniors and adult classes for ages 12 and up.

"I usually work with the juniors and adults and she works mostly with the kids," Tanguay said.

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Lee Anne Brophy, center, is a head instructor and program director at Connecticut Kenpo Karate along with her husband, Wayne Tanguay. The business, which recently moved to Lowrey Place, teaches students of all ages.

arts, Kenpo karate ranks student skill level with colored belts, beginning with white.

"The way the ranking works is that when you start in the martial arts, you get a piece of white cloth," Tanguay explained.

As people continue their training, the cloth got continually darker from use until it was eventually black, thus making the black belt the highest achievement in most forms of martial arts.

"Then, the more they would use the cloth, it would eventually turn white again," Tanguay added. "Everything is full circle."

In their 25 years of experience teaching karate, the couple has seen other instances coming full circle, including their students.

"See this little guy?" Tanguay said, gesturing toward 5-year-old Kevin Winslow as he jumped around the studio before his class. "His father was a student here, too."

"I was maybe 9 or 10," Kevin's father, Patrick Winslow, said of his days taking classes with Brophy.

"We just moved back to the area and wanted a way for him to grow and meet new kids and also a way to let out energy, and I knew coming here that she's an excellent teacher."

In addition to working with students of all ages and experience levels, Brophy and Tanguay have experience working with those who have special needs and are able to adjust their instruction to meet the needs of a variety of students.

Wendy Ciaffaglione, whose son, Tyler, 5, is hearing impaired, said that taking classes with Brophy has helped him to work on his agility, balance and coordination.

"There's just something about her. Her patience level is like a saint," Ciaffaglione said. "Every child learns at their own level and she is always very willing to work with him on a closer level."

"She really understands these kids," Winslow added. "She has the ability to bring them back in and keep them focused and have fun while doing it."

Tanguay described Connecticut Kenpo Karate as a family oriented studio and he encouraged parents to look into the activity as a possibility for their child.

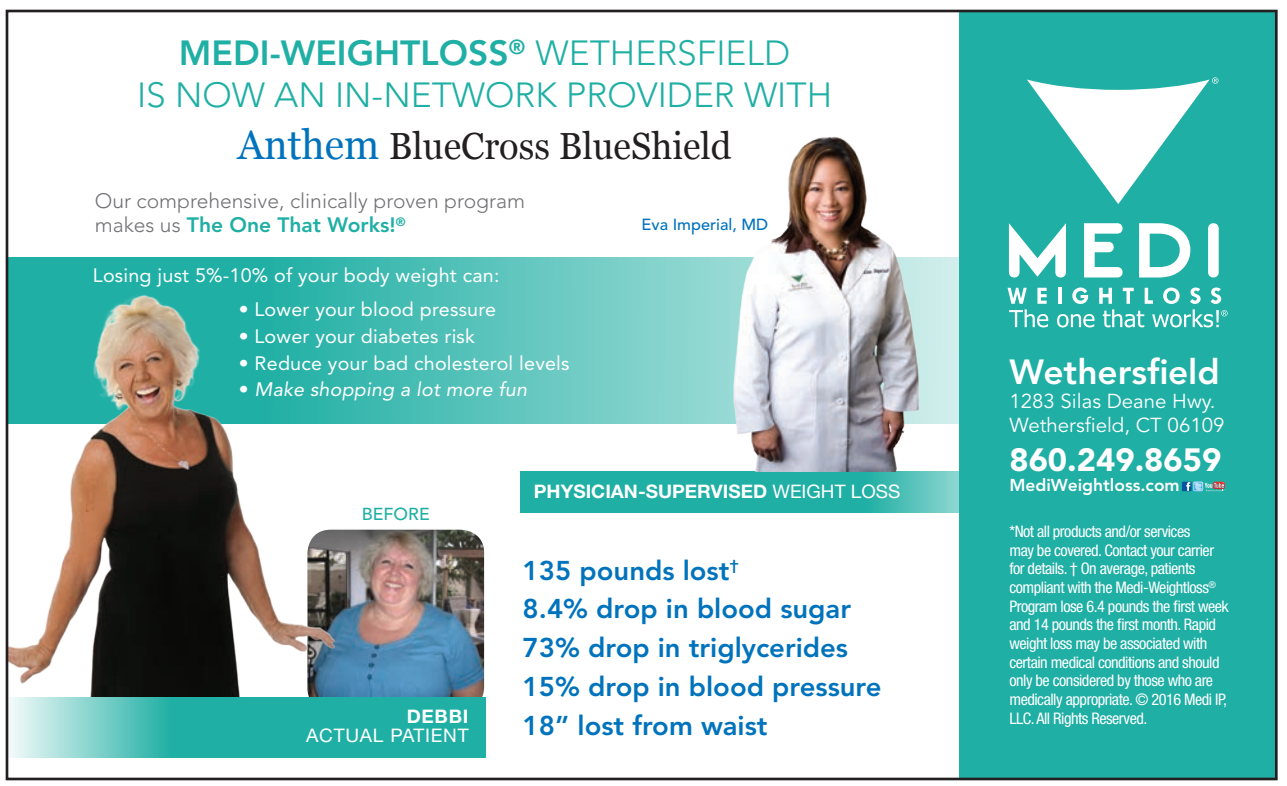
"I'm an advocate for martial arts itself. Parents should try it and see if it works for their kids," he said. "We offer two free weeks, so really they have nothing to lose but a couple weeks of their time."

In addition to providing a free two-week trial, they also provide students a free uniform when they sign up. Tanguay said Connecticut Kenpo Karate offers classes throughout the year and he does not have lengthy contracts, allowing parents and students to register on a month-to-month basis.

With their new location fully set up, Tanguay hopes more families will try Kenpo karate and see if it is a fit.

"We just love what we do," he said. "We love giving kids a positive thing to do in their life." **NL**

Connecticut Kenpo Karate is located at 135 Lowrey Place in the shopping plaza anchored by Best Market. For more information visit ctkenpo.com or call 860-665-9822.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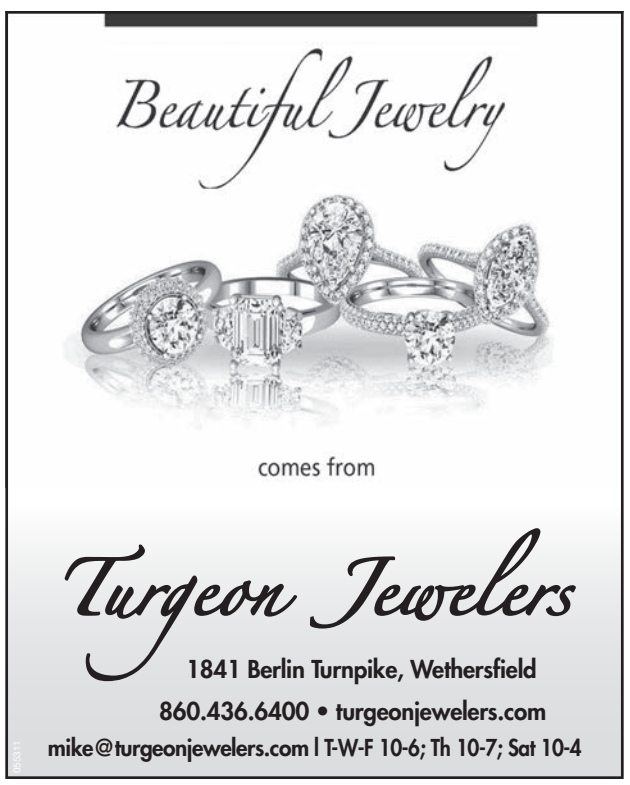

Save money, maximize flavor

Making the most out of a trip to the meat counter

by Sloan Brewster
Senior Staff Writer

Saving money at the meat counter doesn't mean cutting back on flavor. Local experts say there are cuts of meat that taste great without making a dent in your grocery budget.

Brian DeVoe, owner of Fitzgerald's Foods in Simsbury, suggested London Broil as a delicious cut of meat that costs a little less.

To make it more tender, it can be marinated, he said. The longer you marinate it, the more flavorful and tender it will be.

Cube and sandwich steaks are also less pricey, DeVoe said. Cube steaks are tenderized in the store. He suggests breading them and cooking them with gravy, peppers and onions.

"They're very affordable and they make a really good meal," he said.

A good way to cook sandwich steaks, which are thinner, is to pan fry them with olive oil and garlic.

Sirloin strips are naturally tender pieces of meat and can be used in recipes such as Beef Stroganoff, over egg noodles, or cooked with olive oil and salt pepper and put on a salad.

"There's a lot of things you can do with it, and they're very affordable," DeVoe said.

Pot roast or bottom round roast beef are a more affordable cut of meat, he said. Bottom roast is best cooked as a pot roast in broth or gravy because it gets tenderer.

"You can get a lot of meals out a pot roast," DeVoe said.

Ground beef is another way to save money and can be used for meatloaf or Salisbury steaks, he said.

When shopping for ground beef, go for ground chuck verses ground sirloin, said Jim Hasch, meet manager, at West Side Marketplace in Rocky Hill.

"There's little more fat in there so it has more flavor," he said.

A nice cut of steak for a good price is petit sirloin.

"That's a nice cut and it's a little less expensive than a rib eye," he said. "It may be a little tougher than a [New York] strip. … It's still a nice and tender."

When looking for a good price on chicken, go for the thighs and legs, anything with dark meat, they all said, or wait for periodic specials on boneless breasts.

Although chicken is generally affordable, DeVoe said chicken tenderloins are cheaper than breasts.

A nice meal with boneless breasts is to add Cajun seasoning, cut it up and add it to a salad.

"It's a quick, affordable meal," DeVoe said. "If you like the dark meat, you can do the exact same recipe and it's far less expensive – that's probably $2 a pound less."

Pork is generally affordable, DeVoe said. Boneless is a little more expensive, he said, and the bone adds flavor anyway.

Lamb, while more expensive than most meat, also comes in cheaper cuts, the men said.

For a stew, get the shoulder and buy it the bone in it, Hasch said.

There's a time for leg of lamb too, he added.

"Lamb legs may be expensive, but you're going to get a lot more yield. There's less waste. … You use the whole thing." **NL**

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YOUR MONEY *Your* LIFE

Planning to spend

How to manage disposable income

by Alison Jalbert
Assistant Editor

Whether a person is 28 or 68, they want to go to concerts, enjoy a meal at a restaurant with friends or take a trip. With the high cost of living and the importance of saving money, having funds for these "inessential" purchases may seem impossible.

Local experts say it is a possibility, as long as careful planning and budgeting is done.

Diane Fisher, senior vice president of investments with the FDW Group of Raymond James in West Hartford, said 'budget' is a word people of all ages balk at, but it's an important concept to grasp and execute. Certified Financial Planner Nancy Fellinger of planningWise Wealth in Simsbury agreed.

"For absolutely anyone at any stage in life, it's essential to have a spending plan," she said. "I call it a spending plan as opposed to a budget because most people, I think, kind of bristle at the thought of a budget. They think, 'Oh, it's deprivation, the things I can't do because I'm on a budget.'"

The basic concept is to make sure all expenses are tracked, and identifying what is essential, Fellinger said. Putting that plan into practice is the challenge.

For the Millennial generation, those born in the early 1980s through the early 2000s, Fisher said setting up a good budget after graduating high school or college is "the most important thing." It can be easy to do; going online, there are many budget forms available, or, many financial advisors offer their

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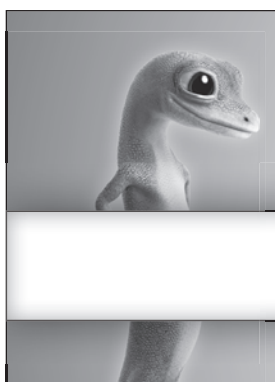

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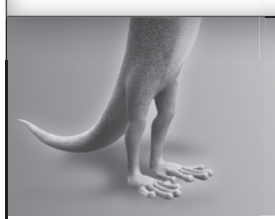

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services to young people for free.

"They can find a financial advisor who can help them set up a budget – there are a lot of goodhearted people out there who will spend the time," she said. "It's all overwhelming unless you have some certain knowledge of it."

Fisher acknowledged that saving money, especially for inessential spending, is difficult.

"The game changer is student loans," she said. "The money they used to put towards discretionary stuff [goes to loans] – they almost have another mortgage or rent."

Fellinger said the challenge many people have is not just distinguishing what qualifies as discretionary, but making choices between those items. If a person wants to watch a movie, do they go to the movies, or get a monthly Netflix account? If they want to go to the museum, do they wait and go on a free or reduced admission day or pay full price? If they want a cup of coffee in the morning, do they make it at home or stop at a coffee shop?

"It's about being conscious of not only what's being bought, but what other alternatives there are," she said. "Sometimes it comes down to, 'Yeah, I've thought about this, but this experience of having this cup of coffee means something to me and I'm going to make a choice to do that … I may need to make some changes in other areas of my life so I can do that and not be stretching myself.'"

People need to realize that if they handle their finances properly, they can still get concert tickets or go out to dinner, Fisher said, but it's most important to save first. At any age, people should save 10 percent of their income, a practice she said is harder now than it was in the past, and avoid impulse purchases.

When it comes to determining how much to set aside for discretionary spending, Fisher said it can be hard to calculate it, percentage-wise, but she recommends including everything someone wants to spend outside of the essentials. It's necessary to go through all expenses – Netflix may seem like only $9 a month and Hulu only $11 – to determine what truly is necessary.

Fellinger quoted baseball great Yogi Berra, who said, "Ninety percent of the game is half mental." Much of what drives the success of a spending plan is a person's outlook and how they approach it mentally.

"It's about being conscious of not only what's being bought, but what alternatives there are."
–Nancy Fellinger

"If we're doing it in a positive kind of way – this is something I can do, this is positive for myself, I feel really good about this – it's going to take [you] in one direction," she said. "If it's perceived as a drag or punishment, it's not going to be good."

Regardless of how limited a budget is, Fellinger said including disposable income as part of a budget is important, because the things it's spent on are what makes life enjoyable. She said people need to look at the entirety of their finances and other resources, including the time spent, energy invested and the return they get on an experience.

"If it's a matter that life is tight because of other necessary expenses – you're budgeting not with money, but with time," she said. "You're looking at expenses not just as dollars, but as time, as energy, as what is nurturing. … You can spend a lot of money on entertainment and still not feel fulfilled." NL

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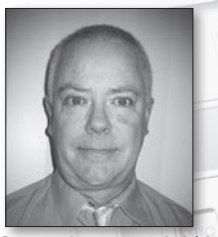

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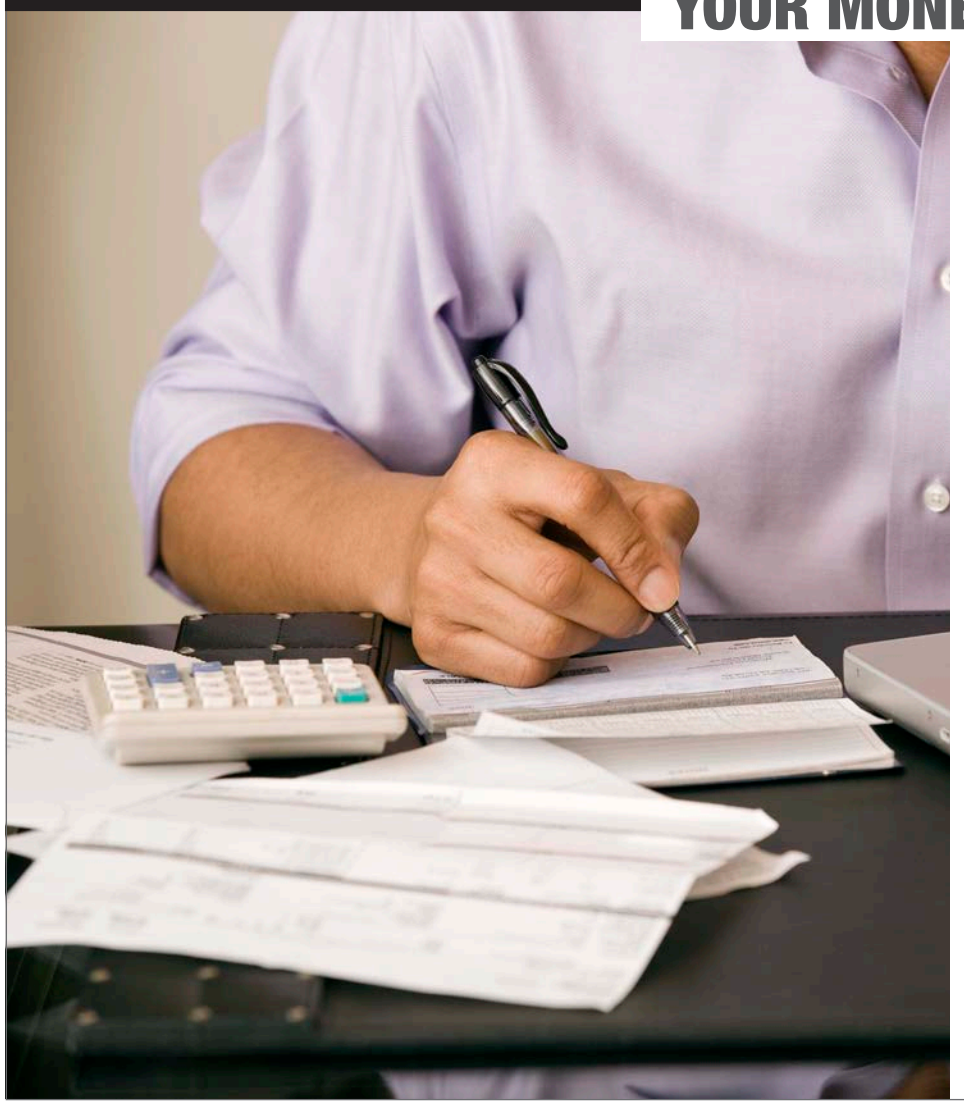

Tax return fraud is increasing

How to prevent it and what to do if it happens to you

by Nancy Thompson
Editor

Last year, the state of Connecticut stopped about $38 million in fraudulent tax returns, about double the amount from the year before. In 2012, the amount was about $7 million.

To say it's become an epidemic is an understatement.

"It's a constant, constant battle," said Kevin Sullivan, commissioner of the state's Department of Revenue Services. "There are more breaches and more energetic thieves, but we're working harder and smarter."

Fraudulent tax returns have become a big issue for states and for the federal government, and all are taking precautions to prevent them.

"We're doing a number of things," Sullivan said, adding that the department cannot reveal all of its new measures. "We have three layers of screening on all returns. We use comparison data, and this year, employers' W-2 forms will come in January instead of March so we'll have that information. We have definitely and deliberately slowed down, and first-time filers will not have the option of direct deposit. Where we see issues we want to buy time."

He said taxpayers filing state

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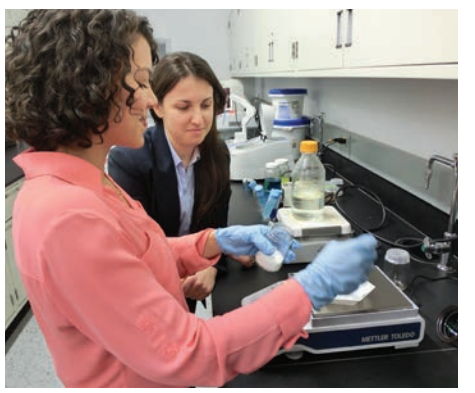
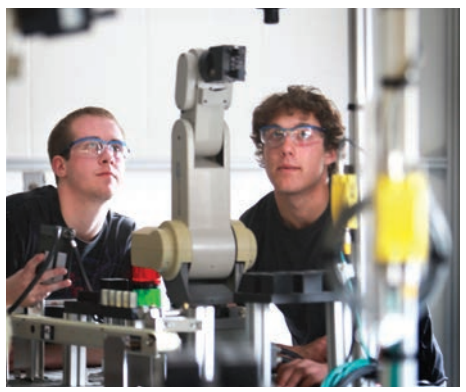

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returns electronically can use the taxpayer service center's online site, which is highly secure and available at no charge, and urged people hiring a tax accountant to be sure the person is reputable.

"The Better Business Bureau is a good source, and seniors and people on limited incomes can have their returns done at their senior center or through the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program sponsored by the Internal Revenue Service," Sullivan said.

Taxpayers can do their part to help, too. Filing early is an effective way to deter thieves.

"The sooner you file, the less likely it is that some crook will file before you do," Sullivan said.

Bruce Filingeri, a certified public accountant and tax partner at Sheptoff, Reuber and Company, P.C. in Glastonbury, offers clients several tips to minimize the chance of becoming the victim of identity theft and the possibility of having their tax return filed fraudulently. He tells clients not to carry their Social Security card or any other document with a Social Security number on it; not to give a business their Social Security number unless required; protect financial information; check their credit report every 12 months; keep personal information in your home secure; and to protect personal computers by using firewalls and anti-spam/virus software, updating security patches and changing passwords for Internet accounts.

Matt Hill, a certified public accountant and tax expert with an office in Wethersfield, offered several tips for decreasing the likelihood of a fraudulent tax return and advice to anyone who learns their taxes have been filed fraudulently.

"In order to minimize the likelihood of someone filing your taxes before you, don't give out your Social Security number or birthdate or prepare your taxes utilizing an unsecure network," he said. "You would be surprised how many individuals file their taxes at Starbucks or Burger King."

When taxpayers file early, it provides a two-week window for the government to deposit a refund into a fraudster's account. If it does happen, he offers this suggestion: "If you discover your taxes have been filed fraudulently, even though you may face a long wait time on the phone, contact the tax authorities immediately. Doing so may save you significant time waiting for the IRS or state to sort through the fraud and allow you to properly file your returns."

It's also important not to reply to phone calls or emails from people claiming to be with the state or federal tax agencies.

"We and the IRS contact taxpayers only by letter, not phone calls or emails," said Sullivan, who himself was targeted in a scam phone call last year by someone claiming to be from the "Internal Revenue Services."

An unwelcome surprise

Many taxpayers have no idea that someone else has stolen their information and filed their tax return until they get a letter from the IRS.

"Dear Taxpayer," it reads. "Someone may have attempted to impersonate you by using your name and Social Security number …"

The letter goes on to explain that the IRS has removed the incorrect return and corrected the bad information and will flag the account for extra scrutiny in the future.

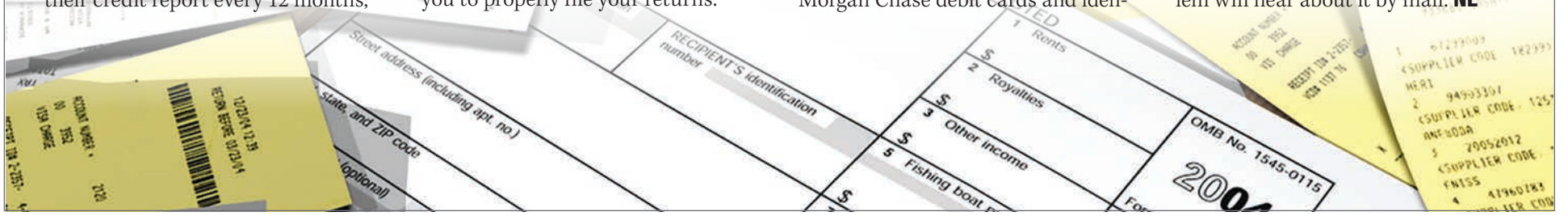
This year, the IRS is also assigning personal identification numbers to taxpayers whose accounts have been hacked, which should help prevent a recurrence, but millions of others are still at risk.

Some blame the recent spike in the number of fraudulent returns on data breaches involving Anthem, JP Morgan Chase debit cards and identity theft rings in Florida and elsewhere, but thieves have many ways to get personal information.

The IRS, the states and the tax industry are working together on several new initiatives to thwart them, including new password standards for tax software and increased efforts to share information about identity theft schemes, and efforts to increase awareness among taxpayers.

A recent bulletin issued by the IRS lists several steps, including more than 20 pieces of shared data to help the software industry and the IRS stop fraudulent returns, information about the length of time it took to create an electronic return, new password standards to access tax software along with a new timed lockout feature and limited unsuccessful login attempts, and the addition of three security questions. More information on the new steps are detailed online at irs.gov/Individuals/Taxes-Security-Together and IRS publication 4524.

Sullivan has this advice for anyone who believes their tax return was filed fraudulently despite the new safeguards: "Call the IRS or the DRS immediately or go to either agency immediately online," he said, adding that taxpayers who may have a problem will hear about it by mail. **NL**



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Photos by Allie Rivera

The cast of Newington High School's "Thoroughly Modern Millie" struck a final pose from one of their many dance numbers.

A "Thoroughly Modern" musical

Newington High School prepares for its annual spring show

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

The show must go on.

Despite multiple weather problems that cancelled rehearsals, students and teachers involved with the Newington High School spring musical are prepared to present their production of "Thoroughly Modern Millie" from March 17-19.

The show, which takes place in the 1920s, tells the story of Millie Dillmount, a wannabe-flapper, played in this production by senior Hayley Gilchrest, 17.

"I love this character," she said. "Her personality and character match a lot of mine."

Christopher Clark, the producer and musical director of the show, said "Thoroughly Modern Millie" was the production of choice due to the large amount of female roles.

"I felt that we had so many talented actresses," he said. "We have a lot of talented men, too, but purely numbers-wise, I was looking for a musical with a predominantly female cast."

Auditions for the show, which the school also produced in 2008, were held in December, with rehearsals beginning as soon as students returned from their winter break in January. For some, starting rehearsals meant familiarizing themselves with a show they had previously never known.

"I didn't really know the show at first, so I looked it up," 17-year-old senior Kenny Bell, who plays Jimmy Smith, said. "There's definitely fun dancing and I love the music."

According to Clark, rehearsing for the show has been an exciting experience for the students, but the biggest challenge they all have encountered has been from winter weather cancelling rehearsals.

"Even if it's just one number you're working on, that's like 30 kids you have to reschedule with," Clark said.

The other challenge Clark and his cast encountered, which he described as a fun challenge, was figuring out how to accurately represent the 1920s.

"I've been doing research with the kids," he said. "We've worked hard to make sure we're still holding the integrity of the piece."

One such way of maintaining the period was through the dance numbers, choreographed by Backstage Academy of Dance owner Kimberly Larson.

"The kids have been very excited about the dance number, which for me, makes it much easier," Larson said. "They like the period pieces where they have to learn those different style dances, but that can also be challenging because these dances are so foreign to them."

To help prepare for the musical's extensive dance numbers Clark, Larson and several students started a tap club at the high school.

"A lot of kids don't tap anymore," Larson said. "Doing that really stirred up interest."

"This show is definitely a crowd pleaser," Hayley said. "There are these explosive dance numbers that everyone will love."

In addition to students acting, singing and tapping across the stage, this production also utilizes students for as many roles as possible, including stage crew, set creation and orchestra pit.

"We have a cast of 54 students, but with the stage crew and pit and everyone we have 120 students participating," Clark said. "We pride ourselves that it's really being put together by students."

The show also enlisted Newington High School teachers Thomas Connolly as director and Stephen Brookes as orchestral director, as well as Joshua G. Berman as technical director. While each of these adults is leading their respective piece toward the production, students are completing the majority of the work.

"We're teachers, we're not community theater," Clark said. "We still have high standards and push the kids, but it's for their own personal growth."

"We would never hire someone to be on the stage, so if it's possible, why would we hire someone for the pit?" he added. "We really try to teach the kids about student leadership."

With the weeks until the premiere dwindling down, some students expressed their gratitude for how much work Clark, Larson, Connolly, Brookes and Berman have put into the show.

"Our director and choreographer and musical director, everyone, they all really support us," Hayley said. "Mr. Clark especially has been there for me so much over the last four years. He's so supportive and he's been there for everything."

"They all really work so hard," Kenny added. "I love seeing how they work together. They each have their own part, but they coordinate together and it turns into this great thing."

Tickets to "Thoroughly Modern Millie" are $13 for adults and $10 for students and senior citizens. **NL**

Welcoming a new restaurant

Town officials and ownership of OnFire Grill on the Berlin Turnpike cut the ribbon to mark the official opening of the new eatery. Shown are, from left, Town Councilor Tim Manke, Deputy Mayor Maureen Klett, owners Aaron Kirby and Arsen Gregorian, state Rep. Gary Byron, Town Councilor Diana Casasanta-Serra and Town Councilor Carol Anest.

Photos by Mark Jahne

Live music was part of the festivities, provided by Lauren Guadagnini and Michael Montgomery of newingtonmusic.com. The event was coordinated by the Newington Chamber of Commerce. Montgomery is a member of the chamber and its board of directors.

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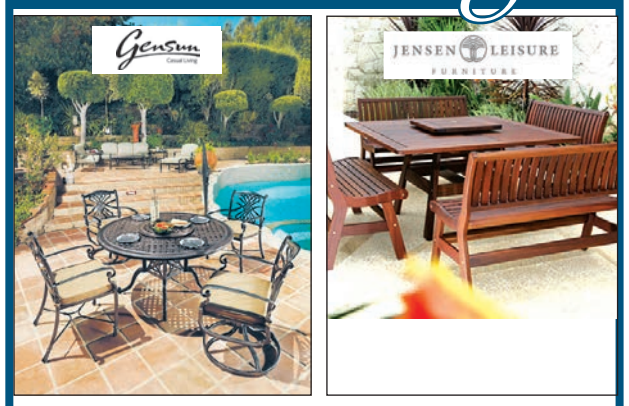

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The store has 40,000 feet of showroom space.

Store owners, town officials and members of the Newington Chamber of Commerce gather while Mayor Roy Zartarian cuts the ribbon to officially open the new Ashley Furniture Homestore on the Berlin Turnpike.

Photos by Mark Jahne

Better than online shopping

Ashley Furniture Homestore opens on turnpike in former bowling alley

by Mark Jahne
Editor

"We're all about lifestyle."
– Sami Abunasra

If Sami Abunasra is correct, his new store will change the way people shop for furniture. It worked at his first location in Manchester, and he is confident it will succeed in Newington as well.

Abunasra and his brother, Nazeeh, are the owners of the new Ashley Furniture Homestore that celebrated its grand opening on the Berlin Turnpike Feb. 5. The business is located in a completely remodeled building that, for decades, was the home of T-Bowl, which featured duckpin bowling.

Abunasra and his brother wanted to expand and selected the location near the town's border with Berlin after extensive research. He is confident they made the right choice. "This is a perfect location on the turnpike," he said.

The store has 40,000 square feet of display space filled with all kinds of furniture and accessories. Abunasra said it is designed in a way that will draw customers back multiple times, even if they do not make a purchase every visit.

He also thinks that consumers who prefer to shop online now will choose to do their research in person at his store, rather than on the Internet. It has computerized touch screen design features customers can use to help select the look they want.

"We're all about lifestyle," he said.

He further described his store as having "everything you do with furnishing. It's a replacement for online shopping."

Because women tend to be much more interested in furniture, interior decorating and general décor than men, the store is designed to appeal to a female shopper.

"It's all about her," Abunasra said.

Ashley can fill the need for any desired look including urban, traditional, contemporary, vintage or casual, which extends to the accessories as well.

In addition to furniture, customers can find rugs, lighting and bedding in the new store. He said the parent company, based in Wisconsin, is the largest furniture manufacturer in the world. **NL**

To learn more about the store's parent company, visit ashleyfurniturehomestore.com

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Small steps, big impact

Young girl focuses her efforts on helping others

by Allie Rivera
Staff Writer

Isabelle Joly may only be 9 years old, but she already has some big issues on her mind. A fourth grade student at Ruth Chaffee School, she has found joy in giving to others.

Isabelle is now working on her third large-scale charity project in the past three years.

"I like giving to people because it gives you a good feeling inside," she said.

The impetus for her charity work began in 2014 simply by watching television.

"I saw a St. Jude's commercial on TV and I said I want to help," Isabelle said. "I asked my mom if I could help the children and she said she'd start a website."

Hoping to collect money to fight childhood cancer, Isabelle and her mother Heather created a fund-raising web page where family and friends could donate. They spread the word through social media and by word of mouth.

Knowledge of their work grew, even reaching WFSB-TV 3 personality Scot Haney. Isabelle's hopes for the fund raising were large and eventually she collected $650.

"I wanted to raise even more, but I knew it'll help," the talkative girl said. "I said, 'Mom, can we do something else?'"

That something else came about this past year when Isabelle got an idea, once again by accident.

"She saw me scrolling through

Photo by Lisa Brisson

With permission from the administration at Ruth Chaffee School, Isabelle Joly, 9, set up collection boxes for Project Night Night, an organization that packages a book, blanket and stuffed animal for homeless children. She is assisted by father Jeremy.

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my phone on Facebook and she saw a picture and started asking me questions," Heather Joly said.

The photo was a post about the Wounded Warrior Project, an organization that helps military veterans recover from physical and psychological wounds.

Isabelle was immediately intrigued by this and told her mother that she wanted to do something to help veterans.

This desire led them to discover the VETSports foundation.

"VETSports provides athletics for people in the military," Isabelle's father, Jeremy Joly, explained.

His daughter decided to once again host a fundraiser, but this time she planned to go even further in her efforts.

"I made a few bracelets to sell and we went to Stop & Shop and had a table there," she said. "We also did a raffle to raise money."

A wide variety of local businesses donated prizes for the raffle, which Heather said was greatly appreciated and helped to boost their fund-raising efforts.

She was about to raise more than $3,000 for VETSports. Isabelle received a letter from a famous and unexpected supporter – President Barack Obama.

"I was freaking out," she said excitedly. "I was so happy."

After the completion of her second charity project, she began to have ideas in her mind to do more, but this time she didn't need to approach her mother.

"My mom came to me and said, 'OK, I'm pretty sure you want to do another one, so what do you want to do?'" Isabelle said with a laugh. "I guess it's a circle of life for me, doing charity."

That desire for a new project brought the Joly family to her current efforts for an organization called Project Night Night.

"She told me what she likes to do and who she likes to help, so I did some research and showed her some options, and she chose Project Night Night," Heather said.

The nonprofit organization provides free "night night packages" to homeless children that contain a stuffed animal, blanket and age-appropriate book. According to Project Night Night's website, one in 30 children in America will face homelessness, and the organization has helped by providing packages

to roughly 25,000 homeless children each year.

"Learning about it almost made me cry," Isabelle said. "I wouldn't want to be homeless and not have a book to read and a warm blanket."

"I wouldn't want to be homeless and not have a book to read and a warm blanket."

– Isabelle Joly

While her past two charitable efforts have been to raise monetary donations, her work this time around is a little different. With the help of the administration at Ruth Chaffee, Isabelle and her parents were able to put collection boxes in the school and send a flier home with all students asking for donations of books, blankets and stuffed animals in good condition.

"There's a whole list of shelters in the country that work with Project Night Night and I saw that there was one in East Hartford," Heather said. "Once we get all the donations, we'll put them all together in totes and bring them to the shelter there."

Isabelle has taken on the responsibility of checking the donation boxes.

"Knowing her, she'll probably check it daily," her father said with a small laugh.

Isabelle is excited to see how well she can do and her parents are supporting her every step of the way.

"Even if we just get a handful of people to donate, that would help," Heather said.

"I'm mostly excited to see a lot of donations and that hopefully the children at the homeless shelter will be happy when they get them," Isabelle added.

Charity has always been an important part of life in the Joly household. Both Heather and Jeremy said they are proud to see how their daughter has taken that philosophy to a new level.

"We don't throw anything away here. We always donate," Heather said.

"This is why it means so much to us that she gives back, because we're by no means rich people. We've struggled, so we know what it's like to live paycheck to paycheck."

Though her Project Night Night work is not yet completed, Isabelle is already starting to think about future projects she can complete and she's beginning to think globally.

"I would like to help places like New York or Detroit," she said.

"We're just honored that she's gotten the recognition she has," Jeremy said. "She's got a huge heart and to us she's one of a kind." **NL**

To donate to Isabelle Joly's Project Night Night fund visit youcaring.com/project-night-night-483742.

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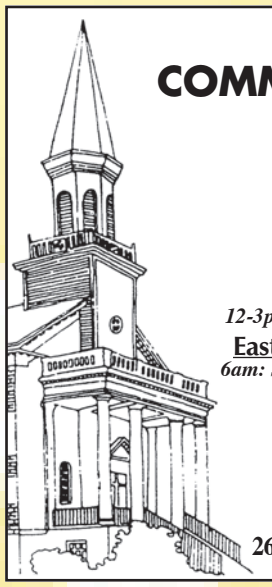

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Lenten Calendar

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March 20th
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Maundy Thursday
March 24th
Service at 7:30 pm

Good Friday
March 25th
Family Worship 2:00 pm
Evening Worship 7:30 pm

Easter Sunday
March 27th
Sunrise Service 6:30 am
at Indian Hill Country Club
Worship in the Sanctuary
9 am and 11 am

LIVING *Your Best* LIFE

Age is just a number

Sisters open fitness studio at a time when their peers are contemplating retirement

by Mark Jahne
Editor

Many people start thinking about retirement when they reach 60. Susan and Donna Valente chose to think about increasing their level of activity by opening their own business.

The sisters are partners in Core Barre/Pilates Studio at 85 Market Square. Lifelong fitness advocates, they run classes most evenings after working full-time jobs during the day.

Donna is 62 and Susan is 60. They opened the studio this past year and remain thrilled that they made the decision to do so.

"This is a sister act here," Susan said.

Both women grew up in town and consider it a great place to live. They were Pilates instructors for another studio before deciding to venture out on their own. They performed major renovations to the space before opening for business.

"I had to do it. I've had this dream for a long time," Susan said. "There's no place else I wanted to be but here. ... It has always been in the back of my mind that I wanted to do this."

"We tried to make this happen years ago and the pieces didn't fall into place," Donna added.

Their family has a history of diabetes and hypertension, so they both became fitness advocates while still in their 20s. They also taught adult education fitness programs in Newington and other area towns.

Classes at their new studio are offered Monday through Thursday evenings and Saturday mornings. Patrons can select either Pilates or barre exercise.

"It's all about quality of life. The older you get, the more important it is to keep in shape [and] keep your muscle mass."
– Susan Valente

Their clients range in age from 20 to over 60. Among them are a few mother-daughter pairs. Right now, all of the clients are women, but the Valentes insist that men are welcome, too.

The workouts are based on the way that dancers train.

"This method does it all," Susan said. "Most of the growth in this studio has come from word of mouth."

Susan, left, and Donna Valente are partners in the Core Barre/Pilates Studio on Market Square.
Photo by Mark Jahne

Donna said their experience has been that once people try out their classes, they keep coming back for more.

"We currently are teaching 11 classes a week between Donna and myself," Susan said. "It's all about quality of life. The older you get, the more important it is to keep in shape, keep your muscle mass."

"All that is going to help prevent injuries down the road," Donna said. "It changes your body really quickly. It helps you to get stronger."

"The classes are all levels. We always offer modifications," Susan added.

The typical client is someone who commits to the program, works hard, and reaps the resulting benefits, she said. NL

Core Barre Pilates Studio is located at 85 Market Square. Call 860-938-8751 or visit corebarrestudio.com for more information.

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LIVING *Your Best* LIFE

The art of making new friends over 50

Friendships are good for your health. People who have close friends and confidants live longer than those who don't, according to an Australian study. The researchers even found that those with the largest number of friends survived the longest.

So how do you start? Here are a few tips for striking up a friendship when you're over 50.

Take possession of a place. Doing so both mentally and physically will make that space more personal.

Put yourself forward. The key to starting a friendship often means putting yourself out there first and not waiting for people to come to you.

Embrace relationships with both genders. Older people have more freedom to have those relationships without all the complications they had in their youth.

Reach out to people who are new to the community. This can be the key to a new relationship.

Put yourself out there. There are many ways to open the doors to friendships by simply getting out.

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LIVING *Your Best* LIFE

Making everyday living easier for mom and dad

Part of my job as an occupational therapist is helping to make tasks of daily living easier and more manageable for patients. Typically in therapy we work on addressing individuals' impairments to allow them full participation and quality of life in their everyday tasks.

Sometimes compensatory tools are helpful to let people achieve these tasks with independence. Here are a few helpful tools and suggestions.

Elastic shoe laces
They make shoes easy to slip on and off and work well with a long-handled shoe horn. They're especially helpful for people who have trouble bending.

Button hook
A handy gadget to help with pulling buttons through button-down shirts or jackets is especially helpful for people with arthritis, numbness in their fingers, or decreased dexterity.

Sock aid
Helps those who have trouble bending or have precautions against bending pull on their socks.

Reacher
Helps with grabbing hard-to-reach-items and is especially useful for people with poor balance or for people who have trouble bending.

Leg lifter
Helps people with pain or weakness lift their legs out of their car or bed.

Zipper pull
Helps pull zippers up and down. Great for people with poor dexterity or visual impairments creating trouble finding their zipper or using it in a timely fashion.

Lift assist cushion
A non-electric and portable cushion that helps people out of a chair. Perfect for people who have already tried therapy training and strengthening and still need that little boost.

Swivel cushion
Turntable cushion that can help with pivoting in or out of a chair.

Shelf paper liner
Can be used as a non-skid material to place under wheelchair cushions or walker trays or used as a placement under plates, cups or utensils. A small piece works well to help people grip the top of a jar to open or close it more easily.

Handy bar
Portable grab bar that fits on all cars to help with sitting in or standing out of a car, providing a safe and sturdy bar to press down on.

Bed assist bar
A bed rail that needs no installation and provides something for people to hold on to for improved mobility in bed and transfers into and out of bed.

Weighted utensils
Helpful in stabilizing tremors and cutting down on spillage when eating.

Rocker knife/pizza cutter
A useful tool for one-handed cutting for people who have had a stroke, amputation, paralysis or other issue. A piece of paper or Dycem non-slip material can be placed under the plate to prevent slipping.

Jar opener
Helps with gripping and opening jars. Especially helpful for people with decreased sensation, strength or dexterity in their hands.

1- to 2-inch pipe insulation
Cut into small segments and tape over feeding utensil handles, walker handles or writing implements to improve grip and maneuverability. Especially helpful for people with arthritis or a diminished grasp.

Book holder
Holds a book in place at the right page so people can focus their attention on reading rather than struggling to hold the book open.

Card holder
Holds playing cards to keep people playing with their friends. Especially helpful for people with arthritis or decreased sensation. **NL**

Note: People experiencing a new onset of any of the problems above should schedule an appointment with their physician and consider therapy treatments to assess the extent of the problem and provide exercises and education to prevent further damage. Submitted by Amanda Bierkan, home-care occupational therapist out of Hartford Health Care at Home.

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Pam P., family member

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LIVING *Your Best* LIFE

LIFE stopped in at area senior centers and asked the question: What advice would you give your 30-year-old self?

"Do everything you can when you're young because as you get older, you lose your freedom.
– Naoma Campbell, 75, Newington

"Finish college first, start your career and then get on with life, marrying and having kids."
– Jan Baldinger, Wethersfield

"Know who you're hanging around with."
– Ray Lampreau, 83, Wethersfield

"I would have invested more money in the stock market – dollar cost averaging into mutual funds. If I did, today I'd be living the life of Riley in Florida."
– Jim Moura, 80, Wethersfield

"Always have something to do."
– Bill Glynn, 90, Wethersfield

"Do a good job, but don't be overly ambitious or you'll get picked for the extra work cleaning up other people's messes."
– Albertine Moura, 78, Wethersfield

"If you didn't go to college, go back, no matter what it takes, to get that extra training."
– Julian Radziszewski, 62, New Britain

"Take life as it comes and don't sweat the small stuff."
– Gladys Kitchens, 93, Rocky Hill

"Plan ahead financially. You think you're going to have enough but it runs out."
– Richard Violette, 75, Rocky Hill

"Stay active."
– Claire Cirullo, 81, Rocky Hill

What's surprised you the most about the aging process?

"I just knew [aging] was a part of life. Working and walking has kept me doing the best I can."
– Bill Glynn, 90, Wethersfield

"You can survive cancer."
– Albertine Moura, 78, Wethersfield

"The aches and pains; realizing you can't do what you did 15 or 20 years ago."
– Julian Radziszewski, 62, New Britain

"It sneaks up so gradually, you don't know you're getting older."
– Gladys Kitchens, 93, Rocky Hill

"I think you mellow out. Things that might have bothered you before don't bother you now. I used to worry about what people think."
– Paul Morline, 71, Rocky Hill

The second act: Favorite films with mature stars

- Grumpy Old Men, 1993: Jack Lemmon and Walter Matthau. A lifelong feud is worsened when a young woman moves into the neighborhood.
- On Golden Pond, 1981: Henry Fonda and Katharine Hepburn. Couple agrees to take care of their estranged daughter's boyfriend's son.
- Driving Miss Daisy, 1989: Morgan Freeman and Jessica Tandy. Story of an older woman and her African-American chauffeur in the American South.
- Harold and Maude, 1971: Ruth Gordon. Harold is changed forever when he meets Maude, a lively 70-something.
- The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel, 2011: Judi Dench, Bill Nighy, Maggie Smith and Tom Wilkinson. British retires head to India to live in a run-down hotel.
- Cocoon, 1985, and Cocoon: The Return, 1988. Seniors swim in a pool with alien cocoons, then in the sequel have to decide whether to stay on Earth or return to the place where nobody ages.
- The Sunshine Boys, 1975: Walter Matthau and George Burns. Vaudeville duo agree to get back together for a television special and then discover they can't stand each other any more.
- Going in Style, 1979: Beau Burns, Art Carney and Lee Strasberg. Three men who need money decide to plan a bank robbery.
- About Schmidt, 2002: Jack Nicholson. Newly retired man travels to his estranged daughter's wedding.
- Away from Her, 2006: Julie Christie and Michael Murphy. Alzheimer's disease and romantic triangle in a nursing home.
- The Bucket List, 2007: Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman. Two terminally ill men head out to fulfill their list of things to do before they die.
- Amour, 2012: Jean-Louis Trintignant and Emmanuelle Riva. Older couple, retired music teachers, find their life changed when the wife has a stroke.
- Freezer Geezers, 2009. Documentary about a team competing in the 75 and older division of a hockey tournament.
- Is Anybody There?, 2008: Michael Caine. Young boy in England meets a retired magician in the nursing home his parents run.

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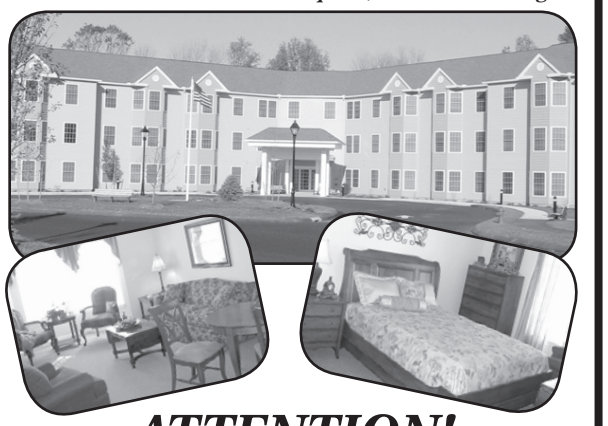

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Slice of LIFE

photos by Lisa Brisson

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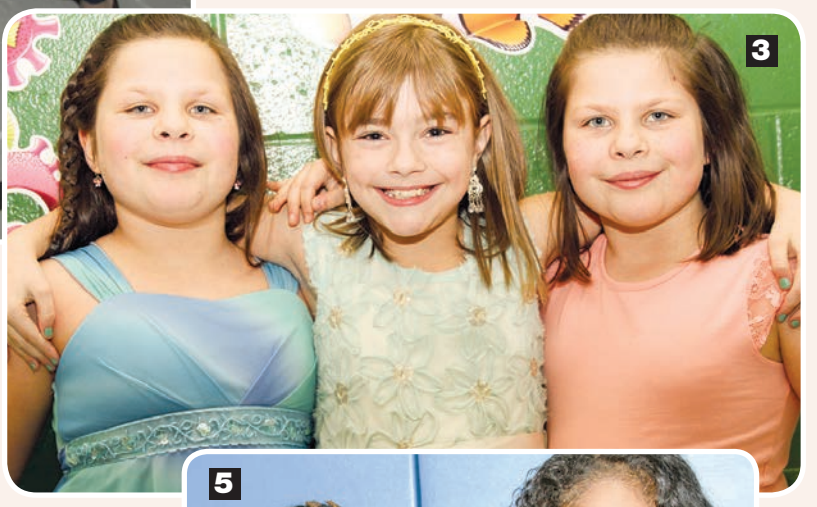
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The gymnasium of John Paterson School was filled with the excitement of female students and their older male guests, along with plenty of loud music and dancing, as the school's PTO sponsored its annual Father/Daughter Dance. The students were accompanied by either a father, stepfather, uncle, grandfather or other male role model. The festive evening had an "under the sea" theme.

5

Dancing with Dad

1. The gymnasium floor at John Paterson School was crowded all night with young dancers. **2.** Chris and Audrey DeFrancesco, 7, have a blast together at the annual dance. **3.** Twins Lindsay and Taylor Ronski, 9, hang out with pal Bryanna Lester, also 9. **4.** Rich Okumura pauses for a minute from the dance floor to take a photo with daughter Alexandra, 6. **5.** Maekaeli Barnes, 6, and her uncle, Damon Davis. **6.** PTO volunteer Kristen O'Brien makes sure the refreshment tables stay stocked. **7.** Aurora Fournier, 9, donned her Little Mermaid costume in keeping with the theme of the dance. **8.** Danica Fox, 9, and her father Dale. **9.** Sean Dugas dances the night away with his 7-year-old daughter Kaitlyn. **10.** Balloons bouncing all over the dance floor were a big hit with the girls. **11.** Sage Campbell and Emily Lagana, both 6, show off the beautiful wrist corsages their dates gave them. **12.** Riley and Hailey Woodward, two-thirds of a 4-year-old set of triplets, take a spin around the dance floor with dad Chris. **13.** Parent volunteer Vinny Gogluicci served as the official photographer for the evening. Here he shoots a keepsake memory of Matthew Grande and his 6-year-old daughter Tessa. **14.** Robert Zadroga takes a moment to capture the special moment with his phone's camera. Here he takes a photo of daughter Natalie, 7 and her buddy Audrey DeFrancesco, 7. **15.** Kassy Ogando, 9, (with fellow dancer Kristina Taylor, 10, in the background) shows the others how it's done.

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March calendar

Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

1 Parent–Child Workshop, 10:15 a.m., for ages 1-3 with a parent, Lucy Robbins Welles Library, 95 Church St., 860-665-8720 or newingtonct.gov/library, also March 8 and 15

2 Just a Story and a Song, 10:15 a.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also March 9

Dr. Seuss's Birthday Celebration, 4 p.m., for grades K-4, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

3 Evening Book Discussion Group, 7 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

7 Kindergarten Registration, 4-6 p.m., Elizabeth Green School, 30 Thomas St., 860-666-3394

Parent–Child Workshop, 6 p.m., for ages 1-3 with a parent, Lucy Robbins Welles Library, also March 14

8 Teen Advisory Board, 2 p.m., for ages 13-18, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Kindergarten Registration, 4-6 p.m., Anna Reynolds School, 85 Reservoir Road, 860-521-7830

National Alliance on Mental Illness, 7 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., 860-205-9542 or 860-830-2129

9 Kindergarten Registration, 4-6 p.m., Ruth Chaffee School, 160 Superior Ave., 860-666-4687

10 Brown Bag It with a Book & Film Discussion, noon, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

MS Support Group, noon to 2 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., 860-667-1314 or 860-236-2751

Kindergarten Registration, 4-6 p.m., John Paterson School, 120 Church St., 860-666-4657

Tech Troubleshooting with Teens, 6:30 p.m., registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

11 Road to Livability from AARP, noon, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

15 Movies and More @ the Library: "Mr. Holmes," 1 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

21 Forever YA Book Club, 7 p.m., ages 14 and older, registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

22 Black Bears in Connecticut, 7 p.m., Lucy Robbins Welles Library

GFWC Newington/ Wethersfield Woman's Club, 7 p.m., Newington Senior & Disabled Center, 120 Cedar St., 860-666-4371

30 The Joy of Coloring: An Adult Coloring Group, 2 p.m., registration required, Lucy Robbins Welles Library

Is your club, community organization, school or house of worship holding an event open to the general public? If so, please send us the details for inclusion in our calendar. Email your events to Mark Jahne at mjahne@turleyct.com or mail them to Turley CT Community Publications, 540 Hopmeadow St., Simsbury, CT 06070.

News roundup

Byron addresses Rotary

State Rep. Gary Byron gave an update to the Newington Rotary Club just before this year's session of the legislature was scheduled to begin. He addressed an array of state issues that affect Newington residents and surrounding communities, from a transportation lockbox to tolls, CTfastrak and the state business climate.

Byron told the Rotarians that although there is a lot of work to do in changing the way the state views itself, he takes a positive approach. He also talked about the state budget and the need to lessen the burden on small business owners.

Rep. Gary Byron

Motorcycles on display

The town Parks and Recreation Department will host its first Motorcycle Madness event from 5:30-8:30 p.m. May 19 at Mill Pond Park. Organizers hope this will become an annual event.

There will be food, beverages, live music and hundreds of motorcycles. General admission is $5 and motorcycle owners who wish to enter various contests can do so for a $10 fee.

All proceeds will be used to pay for the fireworks that are part of the annual Extravaganza. For more information call 860-665-8666 or visit newingtonct.gov/parksandrec.

Recycling expands

The town has added additional items to the list of recyclables that are accepted at the landfill/transfer station located at 2045 Main St. Residents can now recycle fluorescent bulbs, CFLs and alkaline batteries.

These new items are acceptable as part of the electronic waste recycling program that already accepts TVs, computers, printers, stereo equipment, telephones and other electronics.

They are in addition to the recyclables the town currently accepts that include waste oil, propane tanks, single-stream recycling, scrap metal such as appliances and exercise equipment, and textiles such as used clothing and blankets. A full list of items can be found on the town website newingtonct.gov.

Preschool program open house

The Newington Parks and Recreation Department's fully licensed preschool program is open to children ages 3 to 5. An open house will be held from 6-7 p.m. March 1. The facilities are located at 1075 Main St. in the lower level. Register at the Parks and Recreation office in town hall during normal business hours. For more information call 860-665-8666.

KO hockey coming to town

Kingswood Oxford School's ice hockey teams will practice and play in the Newington Arena beginning with the 2016-2017 season, according to Athletic Director Debbie Fiske. The private middle and high school is located in West Hartford.

The choice of the rink on Alumni Road follows an extensive search undertaken after the board of trustees voted to keep ice hockey in the school's athletics program as an off-site offering, with participating families bearing some of the cost.

This season marks the last time that the boys' and girls' hockey teams will skate on campus in KO's Brayton Rink. Later this year, the rink will be closed so renovations can begin to transform the facility into a state-of-the-art fitness center and multi-purpose field house.

Car wash benefits Extravaganza

The Extravaganza fireworks show will be larger and more spectacular than ever July 16 thanks to a new fundraiser at WAVE Car Wash, located at the Shell station at the north end of Main Street. From now through Sept. 1, owner Ed Steremberg will be offering two exclusive car wash deals that include discounts, with all of the proceeds going towards the fireworks show.

Wave Car Wash has agreed to pay Newington Parks and Recreation $4.50 per $12.75 car wash and $4.25 per $10.50 car wash, depending upon the wash and protection package the customer selects. The facility is totally automated and open from 8 a.m. to 8:30 p.m., seven days a week. Punch in 71616 code to receive these special offers.

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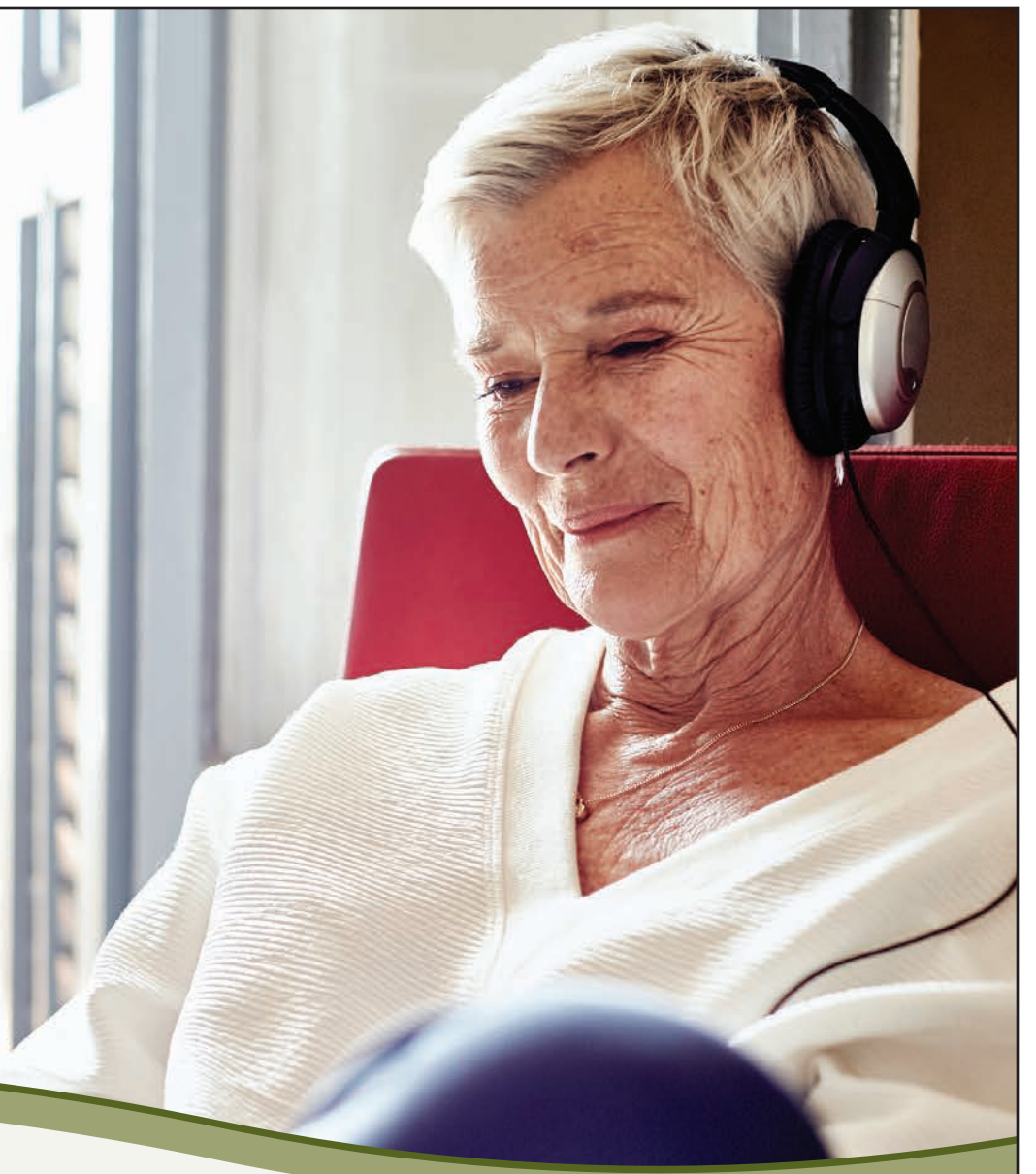

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Tops in their schools

Seven pupils were named students of the month for January in the Newington Public Schools. They are back, from left, Alexis Santo of John Wallace Middle School, Eric Evon of Newington High School and Nicole Parafati of Martin Kellogg Middle School; front, Briseis Tovar of Anna Reynolds School, Madeline Michaud of Ruth Chaffee School, Mia Golec of John Paterson School and Natalie Hrytsyna of Elizabeth Green School.

Preschool Play Nights

Parks and Recreation is now offering Preschool Play Nights for children ages 2 ½ to 5 years. These are one-night programs full of fun activities. Little ones will interact with Creative Playtime Preschool staff.

Each night will keep children entertained with a themed craft, story time and playtime. The next play night will take place from 5:30-7 p.m. March 14.

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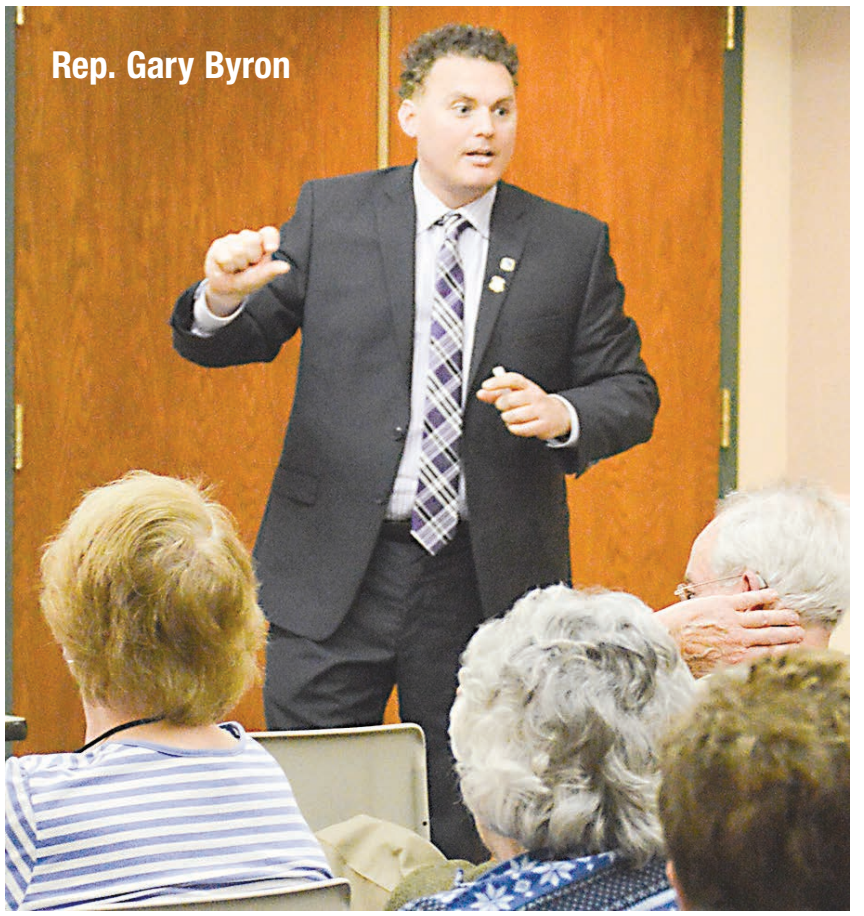
Rep. Gary Byron

Addressing ID theft

To provide helpful and preventive information to residents about identity theft, state Rep. Gary Byron put together an expert panel on the subject for a Feb. 4 program at the Lucy Robbins Welles Library.

The panel consisted of Police Chief Stephen Clark, Lt. Michael Morgan, state Consumer Protection Commissioner Jonathan Harris, Liberty Bank Manager Jodie Lemeris and Nicholas Sabetta, Liberty Bank's security and investigations manager.

Clark told the audience to report possible attempts of identity theft immediately so that law enforcement can work to find to culprit. Identity theft can occur anytime. The most common sources of such theft are family members, collusive employees at a bank or other commercial establishment, stolen mail and stolen commercial documents.

Register for kindergarten

The Newington Public Schools are in the process of conducting residency verification for children who will enter kindergarten in August. In order to be eligible for kindergarten, a child must be 5 years of age on or before Jan. 1, 2017.

Registration packets will be mailed by March 2. Contact your child's school if you do not receive this information. Kindergarten orientation appointments will be scheduled at the residency registration sessions.

If you do not know your school attendance district, contact the office of the superintendent of schools at 860-665-8612.

Learn safe boating

Parks and Recreation is offering a one-day safe boating and personal watercraft certification course from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. March 20. This is a single-session, eight-hour course instructed by Professional Marine Education.

Students must be 12 or older to attend. The fee is $65 for Newington residents and $75 for non-residents. **NL**

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Inquiries about adoption may be made at the Connecticut Humane Society, 701 Russell Road, Newington. Call 860-594-4500. More information, including videos, can be found online at cthumane.org. Click on "Adopt" and "Newington." The Connecticut Humane Society is a private organization and has no time limits for adoption.

Georgette is a 6-year-old female domestic short hair cat. She has a sweet disposition and would fare well with children of any age. The slightest bit of attention gets her purring. Georgette is a polydactyl feline, meaning she has more toes than a typical domestic cat.

Meet Missy and Georgette

Missy is a 5-year-old female terrier/pit bull mix. She loves attention and doesn't make too much noise. Nothing makes her happier than to snooze with her head in someone's lap. She can be a couch potato and has previous experience living with other dogs and cats. A single-family house or condominium would be fine. Missy would mesh with children of any age and needs daily exercise.

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Editorial

So, where do we cut?

It's budget season for both local and state government and, as always, taxes are at the forefront of most people's minds. They almost always seem to go up, don't they? The only question is how much.

That is partly due to the fact that government, just like homeowners and businesses, faces the same annual increase in costs for water, electricity, natural gas, oil, telecommunications, motor vehicles, various forms of insurance and countless other things.

One of the few commodities that has dramatically decreased in cost over the past year is gasoline, but how long will that last?

We clamor for our elected officials to keep taxes under control. Sometimes that works, at least at the municipal level, but so many costs are fixed in terms of labor agreements, employee benefits and such that the focus switches to the rest.

At the state level, we have seen decades of increased spending as government continues to grow. It's easy to spend other people's money, and a series of governors and legislatures have done just that for decades.

The challenge is that there are only so many new sources of revenue to tap, and the last thing most people want is an expansion of the products and services that become subject to taxation. That leaves no option but cutting the budget.

On paper, this sounds simple. Surely we can trim a little here and lop off a little there. That should help, right?

It does, but nipping and tucking will not make a significant dent in the tax burden, either locally or at the state level. One needs big cuts to achieve big savings.

So, where do we cut? Which programs and services need to be reduced in size or scope to less than desired levels in the name of budget reform?

Do we reduce local or state spending for education? If so, are we willing to accept less-accomplished children as a result?

Do we cut Medicaid or other programs that primarily serve senior citizens? If so, where do they turn for help? Social services at all levels are already strapped for staff and cash.

Do we reduce the number of police on the streets or troopers on the highways? Do we reduce the number of snowplows? Do we slash programs that help the poor, the developmentally disabled, or the long-term unemployed?

There are no easy answers, but the people we voted into office we tasked with the duty of making these hard decisions. We need to hold their feet to the fire while at the same time understanding that this is a daunting task. **NL**

Letter

Calls for less politics, transparency

To the Editor:

With the town's AFSCME contract and the selection of a new town manager coming up this spring, I can't help but wonder about the judgment of the newly elected town councilors' willingness to properly vet and select the best applicants to fill key positions in town government.

Our former labor lawyer, Ken Plum, was dismissed by the new council after decades of serving the town in successfully navigating complex and difficult negotiations with employee unions. The new Republican-led council replaced Mr. Plum with an attorney who seems to have little knowledge of this special branch of law.

I can only conclude that this new appointment was made on the basis of politics, not on experience. With AFSCME and other labor contracts looming in the future, I sincerely hope that their new appointee will spend significant time coming up to speed on labor statutes and negotiating skills.

Now this council is moving forward with a search for a new town manager, right in the middle of budget negotiations, I might add. As state subsidies to towns are expected to be severely reduced, Newington will need to do more with less in order to keep taxes and services stable.

I shudder to think that political self-interest may play a part in the appointment of a replacement to our most important town position. The three-member group (Republicans Klett and Nagel and Democrat Anest) must put the interest of our citizens first.

I challenge them to keep the process totally transparent and to explain to our citizens the basis upon which this important appointment is made. Finding and hiring the applicant with the most experience and successful track record in town management is their task.

This is what our citizens have elected them to do – to serve the town, not their personal political interests.

– *Cece Borjeson*

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BY MARK DIXON
WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]

Spring Forward

After hitting rock bottom day-light-wise back on the Winter Solstice in December, we've been steadily gaining daylight (recently 2-3 min/day). We'll continue to do so as we head toward the summer solstice (June 20th). And this month, two important things happen pertaining to the sun:

(1) On Sunday, the 13th, Daylight Saving Time (DST) kicks off – officially at 2 a.m. This is when we set our clocks ahead one hour, to reallocate time from the morning to the afternoon. It's easiest to turn clocks ahead an hour before going to sleep Saturday; then on Sunday, the sun rises at 7:05 a.m. and sets at 6:56 p.m. It's also a good time to put fresh batteries in the smoke detectors!

(2) One week later, on the 20th, is the vernal equinox in the Northern Hemisphere – the official beginning of spring (at 12:30 a.m.). The term "equinox" is Latin, referring to the days of the year when there is equal day and equal night – when the Earth's axis is not tilting in either direction toward or away from the sun (also occurring in September with the transition from summer to autumn). However, the exact timing is more of an approximate - on the 20th we will actually have 12 hours and 10 minutes of possible daylight (sunrise 6:53 a.m., sunset 7:04 p.m.). NL

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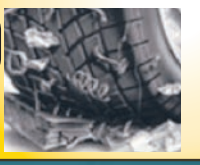

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